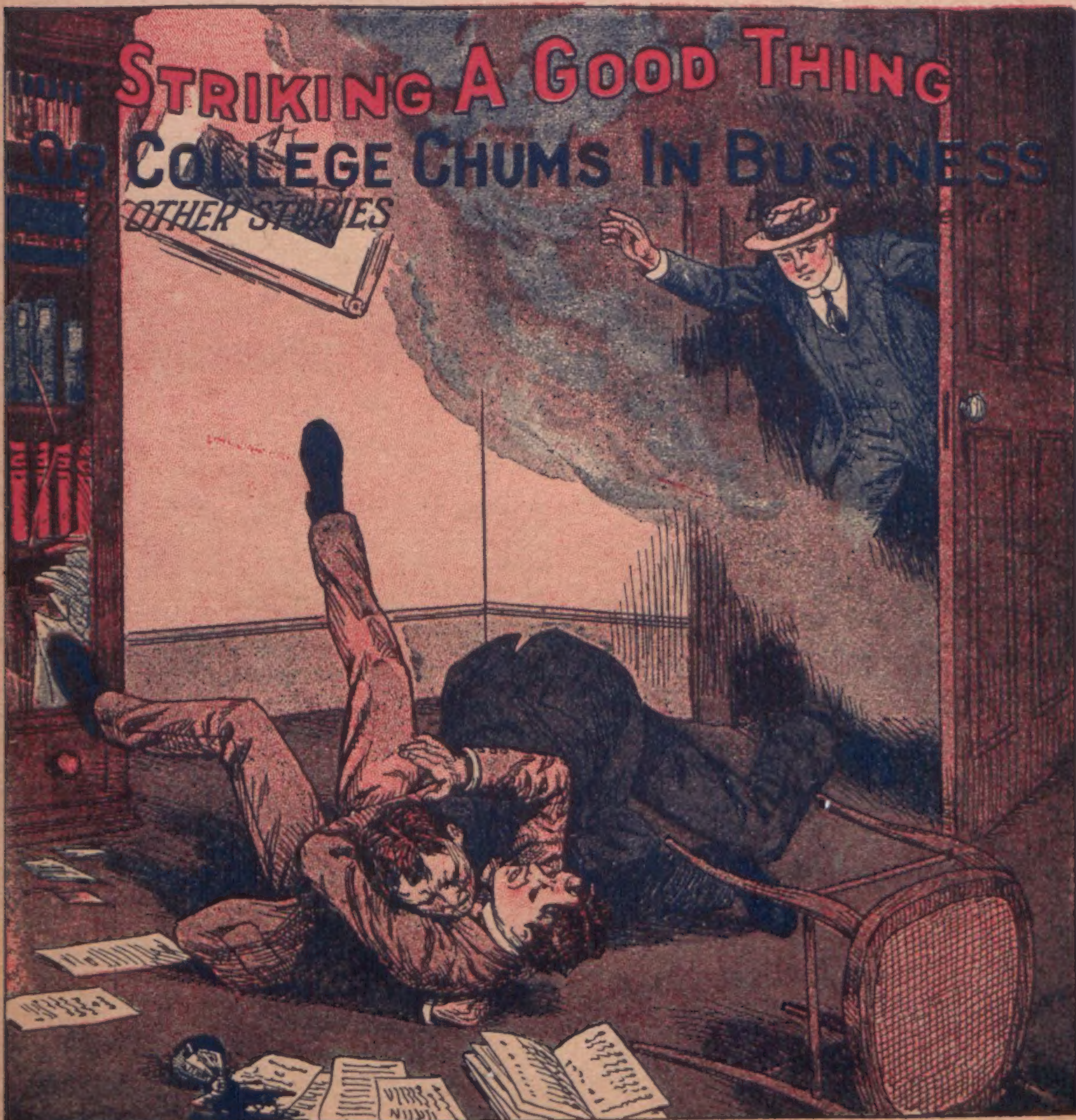


FAME AND FORTUNE

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OF
BOYS

WEEKLY. WHO MAKE
MONEY.



With a shock that shook the room, Dick and his enemy fell to the floor, the latter on top. "Help! Help!" shouted the boy, realizing his disadvantage. At that moment the door flew open, admitting Nick and a cloud of smoke.

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STRIKING A GOOD THING

OR, COLLEGE CHUMS IN BUSINESS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Two College Chums.

"Nick!"

"Dick!"

"Shake, old man! Mighty glad to see you," said Dick Danvers, grasping the extended hand of his college chum, Nick Norcross.

"You're not more glad to see me than I am to see you," said Nick. "What are you doing here?"

"Looking for a job."

"So am I."

"The advertisement indicated that only one position was open. We can't both get it."

"That stands to reason; but as there's a room full of applicants ahead of us, neither of us may get it."

"It won't be the first time I've been turned down since I started to find something to do."

"Nor me. But I thought your rich uncle who was paying your way through college had a fine position in prospect for you."

"So he had, if I had put in the four years, as he expected me to. But you know the first year saw my finish just as it saw yours. The fact that you are looking for work like me indicates that your rich aunt has treated you the same as my uncle handed it to me, because I had to pack up and come home in disgrace, as he put it."

"You're a good guesser. My respected aunt handed me \$100 and told me she was through with me."

"My uncle dismissed me from further consideration with the same amount."

"We seem to have fared exactly alike," grinned Nick.

"And we are now both looking for the same job."

"I wish there were two jobs open in this place and we both got them, so we could be together."

"So do I, but a fellow can't always have his wish."

"You're ahead of me, and have the first shy at the position."

"If one of those chaps in the room is selected, I won't get any show at it."

"Why didn't you get here in time to take the head of the line?"

"Why didn't you?"

"I was delayed."

"The advertisement said call at eight. I came ten minutes before that hour and all those fellows were here before me."

"If the early bird catches this worm we'll not be in it."

"The early bird doesn't always catch the worm, I have noticed."

"He gets the first chance at it. There goes number one now. If he measures up to the requirements that will mean a shut out for the rest of us."

"We'll have to take it philosophically."

"There goes number two."

"I didn't see number one come out."

"He might have been sent away through another door, or is being held till the whole bunch is given a hearing. If you or I, or one of the others, pan out better than he, he will have to make way for the lucky one."

"Number three is going in now. I guess we'll all get a chance."

"I think we're all entitled to that much consideration for coming here."

The line melted by degrees and the two college chums finally reached the door communicating with the manager's office. In five minutes it was opened and Dick was admitted.

"Wish you luck, old fellow," said Nick, as his friend passed inside.

Dick found himself in the presence of a well-dressed, shrewd-looking man, seated at a roll-top desk, the pigeon-holes of which were choked with papers. The man pointed at the vacant chair beside his desk.

"Name, please," he said.

"Richard Danvers."

"Age?"

"Nearly nineteen."

"What counting-room experience have you had?"

"None."

The manager put down his stylographic pen and looked at the boy.

"I think our advertisement said 'some experience.'"

"I admit it did, but how is a chap to get experience unless he gets the chance to accumulate it?"

"That's true enough, but we do not profess to be a kindergarten. Where have you worked?"

"Nowhere." Only been out of college about a month."

"Oh, I see. Did you graduate?"

"No, sir. If I had, I wouldn't be looking for this position."

"You would have aimed higher, eh?"

"A position would have been provided for me."

"By whom?"

"My uncle."

"Why hasn't he provided for you?"

"Because I got into a scrape that led to my dismissal from college. To punish me he turned me loose to make my own way without help from him."

"You are frank in admitting this handicap."

"I never go behind the truth."

"Stick to that, young man. It is a valuable asset."

"I mean to"

"You were living with your uncle, I take it, until the unfortunate——"

"Yes, sir."

"From which I infer that your parents are dead?"

"They are."

"Where are you living now?"

"At a private boarding house on Prescott street."

"As you have had no business experience I'm afraid—how is your nerve?"

"Nerve, sir?"

"Are you plucky? What would you do if brought suddenly face to face with a strenuous situation?"

"I'd meet it as my judgment suggested."

"If your employer's interests were at stake, would you stand by your guns?"

"I certainly would if that were possible," said Dick resolutely.

The manager took note of his speech and manner, jotted something down opposite the applicant's name, and, pointing to a closed door, told Dick to step into the next room. He did so as the manager called out "Next!" to the office boy on guard at the door, who immediately admitted Nick. The interview between Nick and the manager was very similar to that in which Dick had figured.

The manager was not a little surprised at the fact that Nick had also been dropped from college for some escapade, which led to his banishment from his aunt's home, just as Dick had been discarded by his uncle for a similar offence, and also that Nick had no parents, either.

"Upon my word, young man, you and the young fellow who preceded you appear to be in the same boat. May I ask if you two are acquainted, and from the same college, and concerned in the same lark that brought you into all your trouble?"

"Yes, sir. We were chums at college," replied Nick.

"I thought so. What college were you turned out of?"

Nick told him.

"The very one I graduated from. It is a rather poor recommendation you and your friend bring with you in the hope of securing employment here, and yet I think I will give you two a trial."

"What! Both of us?"

"Yes. This is a large contracting firm. We have a big road job on just now some ten miles from this town, and we employ a large force of foreigners on it. Every second Saturday the cashier goes out to the scene of operations and pays the men off. He carries with him a considerable sum of money in his bag, and a clerk goes with him as a bodyguard. Both go armed as a

matter of precaution, not because of any trouble expected from our laborers, though they are a hard lot, as a rule, but to meet any emergency which might arise on the way. Nothing has happened so far, and the cashier has made many trips, but I believe in being prepared just the same. The clerk who has been in the habit of accompanying the cashier has left our employ to better himself, and I advertised for another to take his place in the counting room. As he will go with the cashier on his pay trips, I want one whose nerve can be depended on.

"After interviewing your friend, I decided that in that respect at least he seemed to fill the bill. Now that I've sized you up, I don't see much to choose between you. Inasmuch as we shall need another clerk in three or four weeks, I have concluded to give both of you a chance to make good. A week's trial in the counting room will give me a line on your abilities, and if you both promise well, you will both stay. Now join your friend in that room while I see the rest of the applicants," said the manager.

Nick got up, walked to the closed door and entered the next room, which was the drafting room, and where he found Dick seated watching the work of a young civil engineer, who was seated on a stool in front of a long table covered with plans, blue prints and printed specifications.

CHAPTER II.—The College Chums Introduced Into Business.

Nick glided across the room and seated himself beside his chum.

"Shake, old chap," he said, in a low tone, "we're both slated for a trial here."

"Both?" ejaculated Dick, in pleased surprise.

"So the manager informed me," returned Nick. "He said if we make good we'll stay."

"Mercy, that's good news! I didn't think I'd be taken on, and was surprised when I was sent in here, which appeared to indicate that if no more desirable candidate turned up I would catch on. So you've been selected, too? Maybe he intends to decide between us after he has gone through the rest of the bunch."

"No. He told me another clerk would be needed within a month, and he had concluded to let me have that job. Good idea, I think, to break a fellow in in advance. Then he's ready when you want him."

"That's right. Luck has turned our way at last. I intend to prove to my rich uncle that I can get on without his backing."

"And my wealthy aunt will discover that I can exist without calling on her pocketbook."

"Shake again," said Dick.

"Say, did the manager ask you if you had good nerve?"

"Yes. Kind of surprised me the way he seemed to make a point of it. I did not know that a mere clerk was expected to be supplied with an unusual amount of courage. I wonder if he expects us to sleep on the premises and protect the safe? What do you suppose he asked me?"

"What?"

"He asked me what I would do if brought suddenly face to face with a strenuous situation."

"What answer did you give him?" grinned Nick.

"I gave him to understand that I'd meet it like a man. I wonder what he was driving at?"

"I know."

"You do?"

"He told me."

"What did he tell you?"

"The firm is building a road ten miles from here, and employs quite a number of men—foreigners mostly. They're paid off every two weeks. That takes quite a bunch of money. The cashier pays them on the spot. You will have to go with him as a bodyguard, with a gun in your pocket, to help protect the money en route."

"The manager told you that?"

"Yes."

"The work is being done ten miles from here, you say, and he fears that some time the cashier might be held up on the way. Is that the idea?"

"That's the idea."

"I see the point now. Well, I guess the manager will find I can hold my end up if anything like that happens. We'll travel in a high-power car, I suppose, so in order to hold us up the rascals would have to put an obstruction in the road. The moment I saw anything like that ahead I'd get ready for business."

"Can you shoot?"

"I think I could hit something smaller than a house at close range."

"If it was moving?"

"That would depend on how fast it was moving. If several men tried to hold the pay car up I guess I could get a couple of them. As I don't imagine the cashier would be idle, I fancy the attack would be a failure. Did the manager say that an attempt had been made on the car?"

"No. There hasn't been any trouble yet, but he doesn't want the cashier to be caught napping."

"That shows he's level-headed. 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.'"

At that moment the office boy opened the door and called them both into the manager's office.

"Let me see, you're Danvers?" said the manager, looking at Dick.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. I'll give you the advertised position on trial. As you have had no office experience you'll be given the chance to learn routine work. As a college man, I have taken it for granted that your writing is good, and that you are quick at figures. I see no reason why you shouldn't make good. Your wages to start will be"—and the manager mentioned the amount. "I suppose that is satisfactory to you?"

"Yes, sir. I did not expect much in the way of wages to begin with. What I wanted was a position with some prospects, so that I would work up."

"I think you'll find that here. Our business is expanding. Promotion is certain for those who deserve it. Those who only work by the clock are not likely to get out of their rut, and they are always in danger of being superseded by others more wide awake to their own interests. We have one or two chaps in the office who I fancy won't last. They wouldn't be there now if—but no matter. If you measure up to my anticipations, your wages will be raised in a month."

"Thank you, sir. It won't be my fault if I don't prove valuable to you. I think I can say the same for my friend Norcross. You'll find him up to the minute."

"I trust I shall," smiled the manager. "Now, Norcross, I'm going to turn you over to the chief clerk to learn the rudiments of office work. The rest will be up to you. Your pay will be the same, for the present, as Danvers'."

The manager tapped a bell and the office boy appeared.

"Tell Mr. Brown I wish to see him," said the office mogul.

The boy passed into the drafting room and so on to the counting room. He came back with the cashier and paymaster.

"Mr. Brown," said the manager, "this is Richard Danvers. He is slated for the position of assistant paymaster made vacant by the resignation of Jordan."

"I thought Vickers was to have the position," ventured the cashier. "He told me he had spoken to Mr. Bradley, and that the senior partner was in favor of advancing him."

"Do you want him for your assistant? Would you prefer to take him on your semi-monthly trips?" said the manager sharply.

The cashier looked embarrassed.

"I hardly expect to have any say in the matter, sir," he said.

"Never mind that. I have asked you two questions. I would like a frank reply. I will add a third one—do you think Vickers is the kind of young man to depend upon in a possible emergency?"

"Since you insist on an answer, sir, I will say no to the three questions. My hesitation was due to the fact that Vickers stands well with the head of the firm."

"I understand. Mr. Bradley spoke to me about giving Vickers the position, but I vetoed it at once and he did not insist when I explained my opposition. This young man will fill all the requirements of the position in my estimation, but he is fresh from college and has had no business training. I turn him over to you to look after. In a week let me know how he is getting on."

"Very well, sir," said the cashier.

"As we shall have another opening shortly, I have thought proper to hire this other young man, too. His name is Nicholas Norcross. He is also from college and ignorant of office routine. Hand him over to Fox, with instruction to coach him in his department. Here is a memo of the wages these newcomers are to receive. That is all. Take them away with you."

The manager, whose name the college chums presently learned was Thomas Kent, turned to his desk, and the two new employees of the contracting firm of Bradley, Nichols & Co. followed the cashier to be introduced to their new scene of action.

CHAPTER III.—Vickers.

There was a craning of necks among the clerks in the counting room when the cashier came in with the two new men. One new hand was expected, for everybody knew that the manager had advertised for a clerk, not necessarily to fill

the vacancy left by the withdrawal of Jordan, because Henry Vickers, who stood well with the head of the firm, owing to the fact that he was a distant family connection of Bradley's, had told around that he was to be made assistant to the cashier; but two new hands were not looked for.

The cashier called Fox, a sandy-featured, sharp-looking young man, who was not popular in the office except with Vickers, to his desk, introduced him to Nick, and had a short talk with him. Fox nodded and told Nick to follow. Then to the surprise of the office force, Dick was installed at the desk lately used by Jordan. This could mean only one thing—that the newcomer was to take up the late assistant cashier's work.

Furtive glances were cast at Vickers to see how he took this unexpected state of affairs. Privately, the other clerks enjoyed a secret satisfaction at the look of consternation and rage that came over the face of Vickers at that moment, for he was cordially detested by the rest of the force, Fox, perhaps, excepted. He had a sour disposition, was inclined to be insolent, and had sneakish and bullying propensities. While he had never been put to the test, the opinion prevailed that he was a coward, and was not above resorting to any dirty trick to avoid responsibility for his shortcomings. Fox, who never missed anything that was going on, saw where Dick was established. He chuckled to himself and then started in to put Nick at work at the vacant half of a tall desk near by. After that he sauntered over to Vickers' desk.

"Looks like you have been dumped out of the promotion you expected by the new hand," he said. "I thought you were sure of annexing that desk."

"Oh, I guess that fellow was put there merely for the time being," said Vickers. "It would be an outrage for a new man to step in here over my head, not to speak of the rest. Mr. Bradley promised to speak to the manager about giving me the raise."

"Why didn't Bradley give it to you himself? He's the head boss."

"Kent makes all the appointments."

"But if Bradley told him to make you assistant cashier, Kent would have to do it, wouldn't he?"

"I suppose he would; but he doesn't like me."

"Kent don't?"

"No. He's soured on me for some reason."

"Then you can gamble on it you're out of your raise. That chap must be some friend of Kent's, for a new man is not likely to step into that job without he has a pull with the manager."

"If that is so, I'll get square with him," gritted Vickers.

"Who, Kent?" grinned Fox.

"No—the new fellow," said Vickers, glaring in Dick's direction.

"Better not get caught at it, for if he's a friend of the manager's you may get the G. B."

"Yes?" sneered Vickers. "I guess Bradley would have something to say about that."

"Well, if you had as big a pull with the head boss as I thought you had, seems to me there ought to be no question about you getting the assistant cashiership."

"I'm going to see about it as soon as Bradley comes back from Cincinnati."

"He won't be back for a week, maybe, and that will give the new men the chance to break in in good shape. Bradley maybe won't care to do anything then, particularly if the chap is a friend of the manager's. Kent has a bigger pull with the firm than you have."

"Oh, blame Kent!" hissed Vickers.

Fox walked off chuckling. He was the professed friend of Vickers, but it may be doubted if he was his real friend. Then they went around a great deal together of nights, and Fox steered Vickers into many questionable resorts. Vickers believed Fox would do anything for him he wanted, but whether Fox would was yet to be proved. He might if he saw anything in it.

The morning passed away, and when noon arrived the clerks began going out at intervals to get their lunch. Vickers and Fox went out together about half-past twelve. The cashier told Dick that he had better go at that hour, as he went himself at one, and one of them must be in the office to attend to visitors.

"Can Norcross go out when I do?" said Dick.

"I guess so, unless Mr. Fox has given him something special to do," replied Brown.

Dick went over to Nick's desk.

"Did Mr. Fox tell you when to go to your lunch?"

"No; he said nothing about it," said Nick.

"Then put on your hat and come on."

The two passed out together. They went to a near-by restaurant and took a table near the door. They did not notice that Fox and Vickers were two tables away.

"How do you like it as far as you've got?" said Nick.

"First rate. How are you coming on?"

"All right."

"How do you find that fellow Fox? I don't fancy him much, do you know. I'm glad I'm not under him."

"He's treated me all right so far," said Nick. "There's a clerk at the desk between mine and the railing—Fox seems friendly with him—who looks like a sneak to me. That means we must give him a wide berth."

"I noticed that fellow. He looks grouchy. I never get friendly with those kind of people. The other clerks look like decent enough fellows."

"I spoke to one and he was very pleasant."

"Well, we're a pair of lucky birds, old man. We're with a big firm that seems to be growing."

They finished their meal and returned to the office. Work stopped for the day at five o'clock, and when all hands put away their books and papers, and went to get their hats, Dick and Nick got acquainted with several of their office companions. Fox was a kind of sub-boss, and he should have passed a few words with Dick, to get acquainted with him. He didn't go near him, however. Vickers was standing outside when Dick and Nick came out.

"Say, I'd like to see you a minute," he said to Dick.

"Certainly," replied Dick pleasantly, though he didn't like the clerk's manner, which was somewhat aggressive.

Nick stopped, too.

"I don't want you. You can go on," said Vickers, in a nasty tone, to Nick.

Nick looked at him, said nothing and moved off slowly, stopping near a lamp post. Vickers turned to Dick.

"What's your name?" he said, glaring at the new assistant cashier.

"Richard Danvers. What's yours?"

"My name is Vickers. I want to know if the manager hired you as assistant to the cashier?"

"So I understand."

"So you understand!" sneered Vickers. "Don't you know whether he did or not?"

"I'm only on trial, but I expect to make good."

"Oh, you expect to hold on to the job?"

"Why not? When you first started in you expected to hold on, didn't you?"

"I knew I'd hold on."

"Then you were experienced in your line when you came to the office?"

"That has nothing to do with it. I'm a relative of Mr. Bradley's."

"Is that so?" said Dick, regarding the clerk with new interest.

"That's so," said Vickers, expanding his chest. "If I were you, I wouldn't be certain of holding down the job you're in. I've taken a fancy to it myself, and when Bradley gets back from Cincinnati I'm going to see him about it. Probably you'll be put at my desk. If you are, I'll put you wise to anything that's not clear to you. Get me?"

"Thanks," responded Dick dryly.

Then he recalled what had passed between the manager and the cashier about Vickers and the job of assistant cashier. The clerk had already asked for the position and his application had been turned down hard by the manager, who clearly had no great opinion of him.

"You're welcome," said Vickers, in a condescending tone.

"You think I'll be switched, then?" said Dick, with an inward chuckle.

"It's a safe bet that you will when I see the head of the house."

"Don't you like your present job?"

"I like it well enough, but there's more money in the job of assistant cashier."

"Well, I guess the change won't happen till you see Mr. Bradley. You say you're a relative of his?"

"Yes; my mother was his second cousin."

"It's a fine thing for a clerk to have a pull with his boss."

As Vickers was about to terminate the interview, he remembered something.

"How came you to catch on here?" he asked.

"I answered the manager's advertisement in the paper," said Dick.

"How was it you were picked out of the big bunch I saw in the waiting room?"

"My luck, I suppose. Somebody was sure to be successful, and I happened to be that one."

"I heard you were a friend of Kent's."

"You mean the manager?"

"Who else?"

"No. I never saw him until I was admitted to his room."

"Oh, come now, none of that. He wouldn't put a newcomer over my head and the heads of the other clerks, unless he knew you and wanted to favor you."

"I've told you the truth. I never saw Mr. Kent before this morning."

"That won't go down with me."

"I'm sorry you doubt my word. You can ask him to-morrow."

"Huh!" ejaculated Vickers, walking off, leaving Dick to rejoin his chum.

CHAPTER IV.—The Dynamite Bomb.

A week passed and the two college chums showed up so well in the counting room that Cashier Brown made an enthusiastic report about them to Manager Kent. That latter gentleman was not particularly surprised, for he had sized the two boys up as comers, and that was the reason he had overlooked their business inexperience.

"You think they will do, eh?" he said.

"I am sure they will, sir," replied the cashier.

"This is pay day down the line."

"Yes, sir."

"You will take Danvers with you, of course. Observe how he conducts himself. Give him to understand that, while nothing has ever happened on these trips of yours, no one can tell when something unpleasant might happen. Then take note if he is alert and watchful during the entire trip. If any effort is ever made to hold up the pay car, it will be in the nature of a surprise, and will happen at some lonesome point, of which there are several between the outskirts of the town and the new road."

The cashier nodded and soon after withdrew. The office closed at three on Saturday. At that hour all books and papers had been put in the safe, and the clerks, with their pay envelopes in their pockets, were filing out on the sidewalk. All except Dick. He was still in the counting room with the cashier. Mr. Brown was about to assume the role of paymaster to the workmen employed on the new road ten or twelve miles out of town.

They quit for the week at half-past four. A high-power automobile stood outside the door ready to take Brown and Dick to the money distribution point. The cashier drove the car himself. For reasons which we need not explain he did not care to use a chauffeur on these trips. Nick hung around the door to see them off, and when they came out, Brown with a grip full of bills and Dick with the flat payroll book, he was invited to ride on the back seat, an invitation he accepted with alacrity. The trip was made in quick time, particularly past the secluded parts of the road. During the ride the cashier showed Dick, who was familiar with automobiles in a general way, the particular points of the machine they were using. By the time they reached the ground he was confident he could run the car as well as Mr. Brown. The auto came to a stop in front of the door of the small portable office of the superintendent on the work. It was a rough frame structure that could easily be taken apart for transportation and re-erected at another spot. There was a second building of the same order, but larger, which was known as the tool house. It was after four o'clock and the superintendent was looking for

the arrival of the paymaster. Each man's pay was in an envelope with his name on it, and when the hands knocked off they formed in line, in alphabetical order, under the direction of a foreman, and were marched up to the automobile.

The paying of the men proceeded rapidly, and without any mistakes, for the cashier knew most of the men by their faces, and was able to call their names with precision as he held out the pay envelope to the right man, and it was Dick's duty to check off each name as it was called. The men boarded on the outskirts of a large village about a mile away, and when five o'clock came not one of them was in sight. The watchman was on hand to look after the building, and the superintendent's motor car was waiting to take him and a clerk back to the town.

On the return trip the cashier let Dick run the car, and he proved he could do it as well as anybody. They reached town at half-past five, and Dick and Nick got out within three blocks of their boarding house, for Nick had removed to Dick's domicile after the chums secured their jobs. Vickers in the meanwhile was impatiently awaiting the return of the head of the firm in order to make a squeal because a new employee had been given the position he coveted and had expected to get. Mr. Bradley was expected back that Saturday evening, but he didn't come until the following Wednesday. He appeared at the office on Thursday and Vickers got an audience with him. It did him no good. He was referred to the manager and Vickers knew better than to make a kick to him. The result was the clerk blamed everything on Dick, and he told Fox he was going to get square with him.

"What are you going to do?" asked Fox.

"Never mind. I've got a scheme that will pickle him good and proper."

"Why don't you tell me what it is?"

"I'm telling nobody."

"You're getting mighty close all at once."

"Sometimes it pays to be close," said Vickers, in a mysterious way.

"All right. Please yourself," said Fox. "I thought I might help you."

"Maybe you can when the time comes. I'll let you know," said Vickers, and nothing more was said on the subject at that time.

At the end of the second week of the chums in the office Mr. Kent called Dick to his office and complimented him on the progress he had made.

"I expected you would pan out, Danvers," he said, "for I don't often make mistakes in judging the capabilities of a person; but I hardly thought you would come to the front so quick. Your friend seems to be holding his end up, too, and I shall push him ahead. Mr. Brown told me that he couldn't ask for a better assistant than you, and that he feels safer on the men's pay day when he goes down the road."

"I've tried to do all I could for Mr. Brown, for I like him," said Dick. "As to the trip down the road, the firm can depend on me to back up the cashier to the last gasp if anybody tries to hold up the car."

The manager nodded approvingly and dismissed him. On the following Friday night Mr. Brown went to his weekly lodge meeting. While on his way home around eleven o'clock, as he was passing up the shady and silent block in

which he lived, he was attacked by four men, whose faces were hidden by handkerchiefs, knocked down and severely hurt by a blow from a slungshot, which cut a bad gash on his head.

He was later discovered by a policeman lying unconscious on the sidewalk, with his pockets turned inside out and his watch and chain gone. He was taken to the hospital where his wound was stitched up and he was then brought around. He was put in a ward for the night, and word sent to his house informing his family where he was. Next morning the surgeon found him in a high fever and he had to remain where he was. His wife sent word to Manager Kent that it was impossible for him to appear at the office that day. His absence entailed extra work and new responsibilities on Dick, his assistant. Dick responded nobly and the manager was much pleased with the way he attended to things.

Unfortunately this was payday down the road, and Dick would have to go down himself with the money and pay off. Kent called him into his room and had a talk with him on the subject.

"I guess I can pay the men all right," said Dick. "The superintendent will help me out."

"You'll have to take a clerk with you to look after your duties," said the manager.

"Of course. If you've no objection, I'd like to take my friend Norcross with me. We are a good team."

"Take him, by all means. I'll have a detective go with you as an additional precaution."

"All right, sir. I don't imagine the car is likely to be held up on this particular trip, but the less chance we take the better."

"My idea exactly," replied the manager.

When Dick returned to his desk he called Nick over.

"Owing to the absence of Mr. Brown, I've got to take the money down the road this afternoon to pay off the men. I shall want you to come with me and attend to checking off the pay-roll."

"All right. I'm willing. You don't start until the office closes, do you?"

"No."

"Then it won't be necessary to say anything to Fox."

"No. I asked the manager if I could take you, and he said I could."

"Are you ready to go to lunch?"

"I'm not going out to-day. I'll have the office boy fetch me a bite."

"I can give your order at the restaurant and a waiter will bring it here on a tray."

"Maybe that would be better. Come to think, I'm kind of hungry and a sandwich would hardly fill me up. Have the restaurant send me in roast beef with the side dishes, and any kind of pudding they have on the bill, and a cup of coffee."

"I'll attend to it, old man," said Nick.

Fifteen minutes after Nick went out the waiter appeared with Dick's dinner. He ate it standing at his desk, but had to leave it several times to attend on visitors with bills. During the afternoon Fox asked Nick, who was now known to be Dick's chum, who was going down the road with Danvers to pay off.

"I'm going with him," replied Nick.

"You are? Then he's going to pay off himself?"

"I thought the manager would go or send me," said Fox, a bit surprised.

"All I know about it is what Danvers told me."

Shortly afterward Fox made a trip to Vickers' desk and told him what he had heard from Norcross. Vickers grinned wickedly.

"Glad to hear it," he said.

"Why?"

"If Danvers is crooked he'll have the chance to steal the men's pay."

"I guess he's straight enough," said Fox.

"How do you know he is? He's only been here three weeks. He'll have a chance this afternoon that isn't likely to happen again. I hope he takes advantage of it; then maybe I'll get his desk, which I consider mine by right."

"If your chance of getting to be assistant cashier depends on Danvers going wrong I'm afraid you'll wait a long time for it. I'm a pretty good judge of men, and I'd bank on his honesty, though I don't like the fellow," said Fox.

"If you don't like him what do you stick up for him for?" snarled Vickers, who didn't relish Fox's words.

"I thought I'd let you know what kind of a chap I've sized him up to be, as you don't seem to know him."

"Bah! Your opinion is not infallible," sneered Vickers. "He'll take over \$5,000 down the road with him this afternoon. That's something of a temptation. We'll see if he turns up on Monday."

There was a significant ring in his tones that Fox noticed, and he wondered what was behind it. Before he could say anything more to Vickers, the office boy came up to him and said that the manager wanted to see him in his room. Three o'clock came and the office was closed.

Dick, carrying the grip with the laborers' pay, followed by Nick, with the book, came out and crossed to the auto in which sat a chunky, smooth-faced man on the rear seat. This man was the detective the manager had sent for and to whom Dick had been introduced a short time before. Vickers, who was hanging around, noticed the presence of the man in the car, and he wondered who he was. It did not occur to him that the stranger was an officer, still he didn't like to see him there.

One would suppose it was a matter that did not concern him, but it happened that Vickers was specially interested in the afternoon's trip of the auto. In what way he was interested the reader may learn later. Dick jumped in the chauffeur's seat, placed the bag of money between his legs, and as Nick plumped down beside him he turned on the power and they were off. When they reached the road the boys got out their revolvers and placed them where they could lay their hands upon them at a moment's notice.

The detective leaned back with one hand in his sack coat pocket on the butt of his weapon, and his eyes constantly on the alert. In this way they proceeded for five or six miles, passing several cars going in the opposite direction. Bowling along at good speed, they reached a lonely stretch of the road. As there was nothing in sight ahead, Dick put the car at her fastest gait—a forty-mile-an-hour clip. They shot along like a flying meteor.

Suddenly Dick saw something rise from the

road ahead of them until it came to a rest—a taut line across their path. A small black object dangled from the center of it. Dick uttered an ejaculation of warning when he saw that the obstruction was a rope. What the dangling object in the center was he had no idea.

"A hold-up! Look out! Brace yourselves for a shock!" he shouted to Nick and the detective, both of whom saw the obstruction.

There was no time to shut off speed in the hope of avoiding contact with the rope. Indeed, Dick had no intention of shutting off. At the speed they were making he believed the car would tear its way through the rope, but that would mean a heavy shock to its occupants, who might be pitched out unless they prepared to stand it. The words were barely out of Dick's mouth when the front part of the car hit the rope. The impact was far greater than Dick had supposed it would be. In spite of their grip on the car, they were hurled into and through the air like stones from a catapult, turning over and over like circus acrobats, with a blaze of lurid light and the roar of a heavy explosion in their confused ears.

CHAPTER V.—Tracking the Thieves and the Money.

Dick landed with a crash in a thick mass of bushes. He was unhurt but badly shaken up. Nick landed in the middle of the road all of a heap and lay there, stunned. There was no sign of the detective. As for the car, the explosion had reduced it to a shapeless wreck. The rope had been torn to pieces, save the two ends, each attached to a stout tree on either side of the road. On the side of the highway lay the grip that held the money, turned on its side, but apparently not materially damaged. Out from the bushes on each side came four hard-looking individuals. They paused for a moment to survey the wreck they had brought about by means of the rope and a dynamite bomb.

"Look for the money bag—quick!" cried one, who appeared to be the leader.

"I've got it," replied another, swooping down on the grip.

"Good!" said the other. "Is it busted?"

"No. It's right as a trivet."

"Fine and dandy. The machine has gone to blazes, as we expected it would; now where are the three passengers—the two boys and the man?"

"There's one of them lying in the road yonder."

"Looks as if he had passed in his checks."

"Shall I go and look at him?"

"No. He may be only stunned and in that case will come to of his own accord. If he's dead it's his funeral."

"Here's the man in the ruins of the car," said another.

"I know him. He's a detective. See if he's dead," said the leader.

The officer's face was cut and bloody and his eyes were closed.

"No; his heart beats quite strong," said the man who looked him over.

"Where's the other boy?"

No one could say, for he wasn't in sight.

"Come on, let's make tracks for the lake. We have got the money so the job has been a success. The crowd down the road will have to go without their pay to-day, and the superintendent will have a riot on his hands," said the leader, taking the bag from the hand of the man who had picked it up and pushing his way through the bushes, followed by the other three. The rascals had only lost a few minutes in the road, but those few minutes, as the sequel will show, counted against them. During that brief period of time Dick pulled himself together and extricated himself from the bushes into which he had fallen.

"Gosh! This has been a hold-up for fair. That rope did the business better than I thought it would. Mercy! I didn't know where I was after we hit it until I landed in these bushes. I don't know of a luckier place to land in after such a shock. If I'd hit a tree, or the road, I guess that would have been my finish. As far as I can make out, I seem to be all right. I wonder how Nick and the detective have come out. I must see. Then there's the bag of money. My gracious, I mustn't overlook that. I wouldn't dare show my face in the office again if I lost it."

As Dick started to push his way into the road he saw the four men and he noticed that one of them had the money bag in his hand.

"They've got it, the scoundrels!" he breathed, drawing back so they couldn't see him. "How shall I be able to recover it, without a weapon?"

It didn't look as if he stood the ghost of a show of getting it back, as there were four men in the bunch and it was probable they were armed, too. He saw them leave the road and take to the bushes that fringed the woods. He must follow them, for it would never do to let them get away with the money without an effort on his part to prevent them. He was responsible for the firm's funds, and though he could not be blamed for what had happened so far, he would be expected to do his best toward getting the money away from the rascals who had secured it through their sharp trick.

He called to mind the manager's words—"If your employers' interests were at stake, would you stand by your guns?"

That decided Dick. It was his duty to track the rascals and recover the bag and its contents if it were possible in any way for him to do it, no matter what risk he had to face. He hoped Nick and the detective had escaped serious injury, but he could not possibly investigate their fate and keep track of the rascals, too. He started after the four men, keeping well behind, as he was obliged to do, for it was broad daylight. Had they gone anywhere but through the woods he could hardly have escaped their notice, and that would have defeated his purpose. The woods ran almost all the way to a large lake which was a mile from the road. When he reached the edge of the timber he could go no farther without attracting the rascals' attention.

So he stopped and followed them with his eyes, considering what he should do. They walked straight to the shore, where a small sloop was moored, and, boarding it, put out and headed for an island in the middle of the lake.

"They've got it on me now," said Dick to him-

self. "I can't follow them out on the lake. I wonder if they're going to that island?"

Dick did not lose sight of them, and as they did not alter their course, he soon became certain that they meant to land on the island. And that is what they did, running the craft into a small cove, where they made her fast, lowered the sail and landed. They disappeared among the trees. After waiting a while, Dick walked down to the shore and looked off at the island, wishing he were able to get there somehow. Luck befriended him, for he saw a rowboat tied to a tree near the water's edge. He went over to it, and to his satisfaction saw a pair of oars lying along the seats. It didn't take him many minutes to untie the mooring line, step in and start for the island. He pulled hard, hoping that his movements were not observed by the rascals. He aimed to land at a point as far away from the cove where the boat lay as he could go. Of course he had his back to the island as he proceeded, and could not tell what was going on there, but as he drew near his destination he cast frequent glances over his shoulder. He saw nothing moving anywhere, and was encouraged to believe that he would reach the island unobserved by the four men. His watch told him that it was after four, and he knew that the superintendent of construction on the road job was looking for the coming of the pay car about that time.

"He'll be disappointed, and the men will put up a big kick because their wages are not forthcoming, so that it is safe to predict that there will be a strenuous time around the temporary office," thought Dick.

In a few minutes the boat's bow grounded on the beach and Dick sprang ashore. He pulled the boat along until he found a tree near enough to the water to tie it to, then he walked into the woods that covered the island nearly all over. He went forward with caution, for he did not want to come upon the four men unawares. At length he came to a small open place in which stood a one-story shack.

"I'll bet those fellows are there," he said to himself.

Keeping within the shadow of the trees, he walked around the building. It had a door in front, a window on each side, and the rear was a blank wall. One of the windows was partly open at the bottom. Dick took advantage of the fact that there was no window in the back wall to advance in the direction. Then he made his way in a crouching attitude to the open window. He heard the sounds of men's voices inside. Also the occasional thump of a heavy hand upon a table. As he listened he soon became convinced that the men were playing cards. He judged that they had cut the money bag open, divided its contents and were gambling with their spoils.

He would have liked to look in at the open window in order to get a sight of the men to make certain they were the same fellows he had seen in the road with the money bag in their possession, but it was too risky in broad daylight. The money being now presumed divided, it was harder to recover than ever. What was he going to do about it? It was certainly a big problem. He thought the situation rapidly over as he stood there, but could think of no scheme that

would help him even a little bit. At length it occurred to him that by sailing the sloop back to the shore of the lake and taking the rowboat with him, he could maroon the men on the island. Then if he could beat up enough men to take to the island and capture the rascals he would be able to get back the firm's money. It seemed to be about the only thing he could do that promised results.

"Here, now, none of that, Steve Bunker. You had that ace up your sleeve!" came an angry voice through the open window at that moment.

"You're a liar, Bill Dooling!" returned the other, with an imprecation.

"I say you did!" roared Dooling. "I saw you pick it out. I won't stand for no trick like that. Take your hand off that money. It's mine!"

The sound of a blow followed. That was the prelude to an awful scrimmage between the two, in the midst of which the table went over with a crash. Dick ventured to take a peep through the window. A regular mix-up was going on inside between two of the men, while the other two were trying to separate them. The four chairs were overturned and a bunch of money and a deck of cards were scattered on the floor. Dick left the scene at the height of the hubbub and made his way to the sloop.

CHAPTER VI.—Turning the Tables on the Enemy.

When he reached the cove he stepped aboard the sloop and found the cabin door half open. Looking in, he saw four bunks that had recently been slept in, for they were disarranged and untidy. There was a door in the forward part of the cabin which led into a space in the bows. Dick went and opened the door to see what was beyond and found it was a sort of kitchen, as it was equipped with a small stove, set in a shallow box full of sand, and a number of cooking utensils.

Since he had no time to waste he did not pursue his investigations further, but returned to the cockpit. He intended to hoist the sail first, then untie the mooring rope and spring on board, leaving the light wind to carry the sloop free of the cove. His intentions were not carried out, for, to his dismay, he heard the voices of the rascals close by. They had left the shack about the time he reached the little vessel, and the few minutes he had wasted over a survey of the cabin and cook room gave them time to get so near that it was now impossible for him to leave the sloop without being seen.

"My gracious!" he ejaculated. "What shall I do now?"

On the spur of the moment he retreated to the cabin, but as he realized this was no place for him, he pushed on into the cook room and closed the door. He heard the men come on board, and in a moment or two the mainsail and jib were hoisted and the sloop glided out on the lake.

"I'm in it up to my neck now," thought Dick, "and liable to discovery at any moment. Well, I don't care. I'm standing by my guns. I may not be able to recover the firm's money, but I'm going to try for it just the same. I don't know how

the rascals will handle me when they smoke me out, but if I'm to judge by the method they used against the pay car I fear they won't treat me gently."

The men remained in the cockpit and Dick hoped they would stay there. After a time he ventured to open the door a little way and peered in. The cabin door being open, he could see the chap at the helm, and the legs of another man near by. He wondered where the men were going with the sloop. He saw the island slipping behind astern, and from the direction it lay he judged the craft was bound for the northern end of the lake.

After a while two of the men entered the cabin and started a game of cards, and they were presently joined by a third. Having plenty of money, they played for good-sized stakes. For an hour matters remained unchanged, and then the sloop entered the narrow stream which fed the lake. The sun was setting by that time, and the card game, which had been conducted with varying luck to the participants, broke up and the three men went outside. As darkness fell over the scene Dick looked for one of the men to enter the cook room to prepare supper, for he had noticed the presence of various supplies in cans and boxes, including eggs, bacon, bread, and such. What he looked for shortly came to pass.

One of the rascals entered the cabin, passed through and opened the door communicating with the cook room. The place was so dark that he did not see the boy in there, and as he had not lighted the cabin lamp, it was equally dark out there. Dick possessed himself of the stove lifter to defend himself with. While the man was reaching for the matches the boy determined to strike the first blow, as that would give him the advantage. The moment the little blaze flared up he struck out at the man's head. The blow caught the rascal on the side of the temple and he fell to the floor, stunned.

The match fell from his fingers, expired as it hit the stove, and left the little compartment as dark as it was at first. Dick was ready to strike a second blow, but when he saw the man did not move he knew he had been put out of business for the time being. He looked through the door to see if the noise had attracted the attention of the others, but it had not. He shut the door, pulled a match out of his vest pocket, struck it and looked at the unconscious scoundrel.

"What shall I do with him?" he thought. "He is liable to come to his senses at any moment."

He saw he had given the fellow a nasty blow, for the point of the stove lifter had cut a jagged wound, from which the blood was flowing freely. Seeing a small lamp suspended in a bracket, Dick took it down and lighted the wick, which he turned low. The next thing he did was to search the rascal's pockets and he found a big roll of bills in his sack coat pocket, and two more wads in each of his pants' pockets.

He dropped the money behind the coal box. He gagged the fellow with a dirty cloth, and tied his hands behind him with a piece of brown cord, after taking a revolver from his hip pocket. This done, he shoved the man in front of the door which he left open, after extinguishing the lamp. Half an hour passed and then one of the others looked into the cabin and saw no sign of a light.

in the cook room, where the still senseless chap had gone to cook supper. Evidently he thought that was strange, particularly as he heard no sounds denoting activity in the culinary line.

"What in thunder is the matter with Glenn—has he gone to sleep?" he remarked.

"Eh? What are you talking about?" asked Steven Bunker.

"I'm talking about Glenn."

"What about him?"

"He seems to be mighty quiet forward, and there isn't a spark of light coming from the cook room."

"He's got the door closed," said Bill Dooling, who was steering.

"S'pose he has, the light ought to shine through the cracks, and I don't see any."

"Go there and see what's the matter with him, then."

This conversation was distinctly audible to Dick in the cook room. The man in question, whose name was Myers, entered the cabin and strode forward. He reached out his hand toward the door and found it was open. That was a big surprise to him, for he saw all was dark within the cookroom, and that showed him something was wrong with Glenn.

"What in thunder is the matter with you, Glenn?" he demanded, taking a step forward.

His foot came in contact with Glenn's body, which obstructed the doorway, and losing his balance he pitched forward and struck his head on the edge of the stove. That was the trap Dick had spread for the first one that came there, and it succeeded. Half dazed by the shock, Myers uttered an imprecation, mingled with an ejaculation of pain, as he slipped on his knees. Then Dick struck him with the butt of the revolver and laid him out. Dragging him into the room, the boy found a revolver in his pocket, too, and took possession of it. Searching his other pockets, he found several rolls of money, which he added to the other bunch behind the coal box. He tied the man's hands behind his back, gagged him and shoved him to one side. The ease with which he had disposed of two of the enemy greatly encouraged the plucky lad. There were only two more, and one of them was occupied with the helm. The noise made by Myers was heard by the others, but they suspected nothing wrong, and nothing more happened for ten minutes, when it occurred to Bunker to go and see how things were getting on in the cook room. Dick expected that one of the two in the cockpit would come when the last man failed to go back and report how Glenn was making out with the supper.

Bunker, seeing everything dark forward, could not understand it, except that the cookroom door was closed tight; but even at that there should have been a gleam or two of light filtering through the cracks, and there should be sounds of business in the galley. He bumped against the table in the darkness, and with a muttered imprecation he stopped, fumbled for a match in his pocket and, striking a light, took down the lamp and lit it. Dick had not expected this move on his part, and it upset his plans completely. With the glow in the cabin Bunker saw that the door of the cookroom was open. He also saw the form of Glenn stretched across the

entrance. To say that he was staggered would but mildly express his feelings.

"What in thunder is up here?" he growled.

As Glenn's face was not visible he did not know whether the motionless figure was he or Meyers. Whichever one it was, he could not see the other. He stared at the door, like a person confronted by a startling situation. He could see that there was not a spark of fire in the stove, and not a sign of supper under way.

"Myers, where are you?" he called out.

Myers, being dead to the world, like Glenn, didn't hear the hail. If he had heard it he could not have answered it, owing to the rag across his mouth. Bunker got no reply, of course, and was more mystified than ever. He strode to the door, looked down at Glenn and recognized his clothes.

"It's Glenn," he said. "What's happened to him, and where in creation is Myers?"

Dick saw he must act quickly if he would maintain his advantage. Accordingly, he stepped forward and struck Bunker down with the butt of the revolver. The rascal collapsed under the blow and fell over Glenn. Dick hauled him into the cookroom and found a still bigger amount of money in his pockets, which he put with the rest. The boy added a third revolver to his collection, after which he tied Bunker's hands, but did not gag him. Dick now felt certain of the ultimate result, for only one man remained to be overcome—the fellow at the helm. This was Bill Dooling, and as he had a clear view of the cabin, he had seen Bunker fall. The table being in the way, he had not seen anything further, though.

"What's the matter, Steve?" he called out.

He might have saved his breath, for he got no answer. The strange silence that reigned forward where his three companions had gone greatly puzzled him.

"Why don't you answer my hail?" he shouted again.

Not a sign or a sound from even one of his friends came back to him.

"There's something blamed queer going on in the cooking room," he muttered. "There's three of them gone in there, and you'd think they were dead ones for all the attention they pay to me. I'm getting hungry. Supper ought to be ready by this time, but hanged if I can see a thing doing in the cookroom."

When several minutes passed and matters remained as they were, he grew angry as well as impatient. Grabbing a rope, he tied the tiller and started for the cookroom, with the air of a person who meant business. Dick stepped out and confronted him with leveled revolver.

"Throw up your hands," he said, "or I'll shoot!"

Dooling was taken completely by surprise and started back.

"Who the mischief are you?" he asked.

"No matter. Up with your hands and be quick about it."

Dooling reached for his gun. Dick fired at his right arm and the rascal gave a yell of pain, for the ball had broken his forearm. His language was something fierce, as he glared at the boy, who had the drop on him.

"Turn around, you scoundrel, or I'll put a ball through your heart next!" cried the resolute boy, who, however, had no intention of carrying out his threat.

Between the pain of his arm and the hopelessness of resistance, Dooling gave in and faced about. Dick stepped forward and took his gun away from him. Holding the cold muzzle of his weapon pressed against the back of the ruffian's head, and threatening him with death if he stirred, Dick went through his pockets and got the rest of the stolen money. Bidding the rascal lie down on the nearest bunk, he tied his ankles together and left him. Thus he had turned the tables completely on the scoundrels, made them all prisoners and recovered the whole of the stolen money.

CHAPTER VII.—Dick Takes Charge of the Sloop.

Dick went out into the cockpit and found the sloop steering herself. The wind was light and she was not making much headway. The landscape all around was dark and lonesome. There was not a light in sight. Dick hadn't the remotest idea where he was or where he was going. At any rate, he wasn't going any farther in that direction. He untied the rope that held the tiller and put the sloop about.

He had no great knowledge of boat sailing, but he had no trouble making the change, though he executed it awkwardly, and nearly got a crack from the boom when it swung across the cockpit. With the boom out to starboard, and the sloop headed back for the lake some miles distant, he tied the tiller again and re-entered the cabin. Dooling lay groaning in the bunk from the pain of his wound. Dick wasted no sympathy on him. Going into the cookroom, he collected the money he had thrown behind the coal box and brought it out to the cabin table, where he proceeded to sort out the bills of different denominations and lay them on separate piles.

Then he counted the whole and found the sum correct, with about ten dollars over, which belonged to the rascals. This overplus he put in his vest pocket to turn over to the police with his prisoners. The firm's money he wrapped up in a newspaper and tied it up with cord.

"I never thought when the boat left the island that I'd come out ahead in this way," he said to himself. "I've captured the whole bunch single-handed and got the money back. I don't think the firm will find any fault with the way I've acted. I couldn't avoid the hold-up. Nobody could have escaped it. I don't see how the car could have made the terrific noise it did on striking the rope. The gasoline tank must have caught fire and blown up. Yet even that, I don't see how it could have made such a terrific noise unless my ears deceived me."

Carrying the package of money out into the cockpit, Dick released the tiller and took charge of it. The current being now with the sloop, she went on somewhat faster. Dick was feeling decidedly hungry by that time. After steering a while he returned to the cook room and began foraging for a meal. A pie and part of a loaf of bread were the only articles available other than. He took both out to the cockpit and ate as much as he wanted.

"Now I feel better," he said, smacking his lips.

His thoughts recurred to his chum and the detective, particularly the former, and in the light of his own narrow escape from the car he began to have some grave doubts about the fate of his companions.

"I hope they escaped with slight bruises," he said to himself. "I should feel very sorry if Nick were badly hurt."

The river narrowed at a point he was approaching, but in the gloom Dick did not notice it. Suddenly the boat ran on a part of the left bank and stopped, with a jolt that threw the boy forward.

"I wonder where I've got to?" he asked himself.

He left the tiller and went forward to investigate. There was so little light that he could not make out the shore, although he was practically on it. He looked around the sloop for something to push off with, but there was nothing he could use for that purpose.

"This is kind of rough," he said.

He struck a match and looked at his watch. It was after nine.

"There doesn't appear to be a house anywhere around, for I don't see a light. The only lights I've seen since I took charge of this boat were a long way off, and only a couple at that, one on either side of this river. I had no idea the country up this way was so thinly settled. It's too bad I've run into this dilemma, for I don't see how I can get out of it before morning, maybe not then. To-morrow is Sunday and the few people up this way won't be stirring around. I feel as helpless at this moment as a fish out of water."

Still his spirits did not flag, for he felt he had done a big thing in capturing the four scoundrels who had destroyed the automobile and got away with the firm's money, which he now had in his possession. His adventure was sure to be printed in the Sterling papers, and he did not doubt but he would be complimented by the manager and the firm. He returned to the cockpit and sat there. The mainsail and jib flapped softly in the night wind. Figuring on his position, he judged he was still some distance from the lake. Suddenly he heard a curious sound at a distance ahead. He listened intently and as it grew clearer, showing that it was approaching, he made it out to be the noise of some kind of engine.

"Sounds to me like a motor boat," he said. "It's coming this way. I'll get the people in it to help me off."

Looking eagerly down the dark stream, he saw a light come in sight, as though rounding a turn in the river. The light proved to be of the search variety, and it was being flashed on each bank alternately. Oo! oo! oo! oo! came on the boat, which now Dick was sure was a naptha launch. It was making pretty good speed and the light rapidly drew near the spot where the sloop was stuck. The flashing of the light gave Dick his first idea of the width of the stream he had been following, and the general character of the banks, which were low and bordered with reeds and cat-tails.

In a few moments the light flashed upon the dark sides of the sloop and her weather-beaten

sails. After that the light remained stationary, bringing the boat out into relief against the dark background.

"They've spotted the sloop," thought the boy; "now I'll get out of my predicament, for that launch ought to pull this boat clear without any great trouble."

The launch was headed straight for the stranded boat, and it didn't take her many minutes to come up. The persons aboard of her easily saw Dick seated in the stern, but they did not know she was aground, though they might have had some suspicion of the fact, noticing that her sails were hoisted. Finally the chugging sound ceased and the launch came on under her momentum only. In this way she ran up close to the sloop.

"Hello!" shouted Dick. "Want to do me a favor?"

"Who are you?" came back the reply.

"My name is Dick Danvers. I'm aground here and want to be helped off."

"Danvers, eh?" came back the voice. "Are you the assistant cashier for Bradley, Nichols & Co.?"

"Yes."

"How in thunder did you get up here, and what are you doing in that sloop?"

"What do you want to know that for?" returned Dick, as the launch ran alongside.

He saw there were four men in the boat. Two of these, who were in the bow, stepped aboard the sloop.

"Because we're out hunting for you and the rascals who blew up the pay car this afternoon. They got away with the money, and until this moment we supposed they had got away with you, too."

"Are you detectives from Sterling?"

"We are."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"You haven't answered my questions."

"Show me your badge so I can make sure of your identity and I'll answer all the questions you choose to put to me."

The officer displayed it and Dick was satisfied.

"Who's that groaning in the cabin?" said the detective. "You're not alone. Benson, step inside and see what's going on there."

"You'll find the men in there who blew up the car," said Dick.

"What's that?" said the officer, staring at him.

"I've captured the four of them single-handed and recovered the money from them," said Dick, in a tone of pardonable exultation.

"Is this true, young man?" asked the astonished detective.

"You'll find it so. The fellow you hear groaning I was obliged to shoot, for he started to draw his gun on me. The others I got easily by a little sharp work on my part. I put each of them to sleep with a tap on the head. You'll find those three bound and gagged in the cockpit. They were still in the boat the last time I saw them."

"Upon my word, you're a corker, young fellow. I don't see how you did the trick."

"It was a question of do it or get done myself," said Dick. "I used my brains against the four rascals and their weapons, and I won out. Here's one of their revolvers. The other three are in the boat with the package of money."

"The fact that you are so far from the scene

of the crime indicates that you were in the power of the rascals for a time."

"The indication is wrong. I was at no time in their power. I followed them to the island in the lake, and from the island they carried me, unawares, up this river as far as I let them go. When I've told you all the facts you'll understand the case."

"I'll hear you in a few minutes. Well, Benson?" to his assistant, who reappeared at the cabin door.

Benson reported that he had found a wounded man in one of the bunks with his ankles tied and had discovered three more men, bound and gagged in the galley on the floor, one of them unconscious, with a gash over his temple. That corroborated Dick's statement. The boy was then invited to tell his story, which he did.

"You've behaved like a major," said the chief detective, "and I guess your firm will appreciate your efforts."

He then ordered the sloop's sails lowered and a towing line attached to her bows from the stern of the launch. Ten minutes later the party was on the way down the river, the detectives remaining on the sloop with Dick.

CHAPTER VIII.—Vickers in a Funk.

It took an hour to reach the lake, and twenty minutes more to proceed to a small wharf, from which the detective's party had embarked to scout the lake and, if need be, the river, for a sloop which had been seen making for the island with four men on board soon after the outrage in the road. The launch belonged to the owner of the farm bordering on the lake, and he had loaned it to the detectives, sending a man with them to run it. Dick learned that Nick, and the detective who accompanied them in the car, had been discovered by the occupants of an automobile going toward town.

Nick was coming to his senses at the time, but was severely injured. He told the few facts about the hold-up that he knew. A hunt was made for the bag of money, which was not found, but the detective was taken out of the ruins of the car unconscious. Nick insisted on a search for his friend Dick, and the occupants of the car spent some time looking for the assistant cashier, but failed to find any trace of him. He, like the bag of money and the scoundrels responsible for the crime, had disappeared. Nick wanted to continue the search himself, but was in no condition to undertake it.

He and the detective were carried to the hospital in town. The party in the auto then went to the station house and notified the police about the outrage. An officer was sent to the hospital to interview Nick. The boy was better but very shaky when he arrived there. The hospital authorities, at Nick's earnest request, had notified Manager Kent by phone at his house, and that gentleman arrived about the same time as did the officer. Nick told his story, and he insisted that his friend Dick must have been carried off by the rascals concerned in the outrage, who had clearly got the money.

The manager was in a great sweat over the

affair. It was then after six o'clock, and he judged that there had been high jinks among the workmen down the road, owing to the failure of their pay to reach them. It was too late now to duplicate the money and take it down, for the bank had been closed hours since. He expected to see the road superintendent come tearing into town for an explanation, and he rushed down to the office to wait there for his coming.

On the way he stopped at the station house and arranged for several detectives to go to the scene of the hold-up and start from there to trail the robbers to their hiding place, wherever that might be. He offered a reward of \$1,000 for the recovery of the stolen money. Such were the facts that Dick learned from the chief detective on their way to the private wharf. The detectives, four in number, had come out in a fast car. Two of the officers had gone off in the direction opposite to the lake, and where they were now only themselves knew. The auto was at the farm of the man who owned the launch. Into it were bundled the four rascals, handcuffed, with Dick on the seat with one of the officers, who acted as the chauffeur, with the package of money at his feet.

The ride back to town was made in record time, as the road was clear, and the party duly landed at the station house. Manager Kent was notified that the robbers had been caught and the money recovered, and he hastened to the station house to learn the particulars from Dick. The young assistant cashier showed none of the bad effects of the hold-up, as did Nick and the detective who had gone in the pay car. Mr. Kent was surprised at his chipper appearance after such strenuous experience, and congratulated him on getting off so well. He was still more surprised when Dick told him his story, in the presence of the chief of police.

"By George! It is quite clear that you saved the money, Danvers. It will be a big feather in your cap with the firm. You are a boy of nerve and action, and no one could have done better than you. I have offered a reward of \$1,000 for the recovery of that money, and I shall ask the firm to pay it over to you," said Kent.

"No, sir, and, consequently, I'm not entitled to any reward. Were I not connected with the firm, then I might, with propriety, claim the reward; but as it is, you can see yourself that I am out of it," said Dick.

The manager nodded, but said he was entitled to some special acknowledgment in consideration of his zeal. Dick insisted to the contrary, and so the matter rested. It was after midnight when he reached his boarding house and found Nick absent. The two daily papers, next morning, printed the hold-up sensation in full, and it was in every one's mouth around breakfast time. After his morning meal, Dick hurried to the hospital and was admitted to see his chum, whose head was in bandages, though he was feeling pretty good.

"Well, old man, you look as if you'd been through a battle," said Dick.

"I consider myself lucky to be alive. The detective is in a pretty bad way. How in creation did you come off so easily? You haven't a scratch."

"Because I landed in the bushes, I suppose. I had a lucky escape."

"That's all right, but without nerve and pluck you couldn't have carried the thing through," said Nick. "Well, I guess I'll go along with you. I don't see any reason why I should remain longer here. The surgeon has rebandaged my head, and it won't have to be touched again till to-morrow morning. I can come back then and have it attended to."

The house surgeon allowed Nick to go, and the boys went away together. There were two persons in Sterling who read the story of the hold-up without enthusiasm. One of them was Fox, who didn't like Dick Danvers, nor Nick Norcross, for that matter, and was not pleased at the idea of the former distinguishing himself. The other was Hen Vickers, who was both surprised and alarmed.

And he had reason to be, since he was the real instigator of the outrage, not only on the pay car, but on Cashier Brown, whom he had assaulted in order to prevent him from going out with the money that Saturday. If the affair had gone through with full success, Vickers was to get a fifth share of the plunder. As the case now stood, he would get nothing, and was in danger of being given away by his captured associates. He was shaking in his shoes when Fox, who suspected he had some connection with the hold-up, called on him about nine in the morning.

"Hello, Vickers! Why are you looking so white about the gills?" asked Fox.

"Oh, I don't feel well this morning. Stayed up too late last night and drank too much hot stuff," replied Vickers, with a sickly grin.

"What do you think of Danvers, now?"

"I hate him worse than ever!" hissed Vickers savagely.

"I guess that fact won't worry him much," chuckled Fox.

"Maybe it will yet."

"You knew it was going to be pulled off, didn't you?"

"I knew it! Say, what are you trying to spring on me?"

"You told me a week or so ago that you had a scheme up your sleeve that you were going to work on Danvers to get square with him. Yesterday we had a short talk at your desk and your remarks were rather significant. It's my opinion that you engineered that scheme and that you're sick this morning because it failed."

"You're dreaming!" blustered Vickers.

"Well, are you going to stick here all day, or are you coming down the street with me?" said Fox.

Before Vickers could reply there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," he said.

The landlady opened the door.

"Here's a note that was left for you, Mr. Vickers," she said.

The young man walked over and took it. He carried it to the window, tore it open and read it.

"To Hen Vickers:—The job was pulled off in good shape, but the morning paper shows just how it ended in a failure, landing yours truly and pals in jail. We look to you to hire a lawyer to get us out of this scrape, for we ain't got a

red ourselves to pay one to take the case. See that you attend to it, or something might happen to you. If we have to do time for the hold-up, somebody else will have to face the music, too. When we're brought before the magistrate we'll waive examination, and that will give you time to get busy. If you fail to come to time, you know what you can expect. Enough said.

"STEVE BUNKER."

Vickers' hands trembled as he read the note. What was he going to do? He had no money to hire a lawyer for the men. The only thing he could do was to pack up and skip the town before the men squealed on him. That was the last thing he wanted to do, but there seemed to be no help for it. He shoved the note in his pocket and turning to Fox, said:

"I feel too rocky to go out this morning. I'll meet you this evening at Gilligan's."

"Oh, all right," said Fox carelessly. "I'll be there around eight."

He opened the door and walked out, satisfied that Vickers knew more about the hold-up than he would admit.

After Fox left Vickers thought of a desperate thing to do. It was to burglarize the safe in the office of the firm he worked for. Having a key to the building he went there and let himself in. Knowing the combination of the safe, it was an easy matter to open it and help himself to whatever was in it. But just as he finished and turned around he looked into the face of Dick Danvers, who had been sent on an errand to the office by Mr. Kent. Nick Norcross was with him, but stayed outside the building and waited for Dick.

The instant Vickers saw he was cornered he seized a heavy ruler lying on top of the safe and struck Dick on the head with it, rendering him unconscious. Then an idea seized Vickers to set the place on fire and then make his escape. So he set to work, and piled papers and dumped the contents of an oil can in the middle of the floor. There was a paint shop next door to the office. Ignoring the inflammable stuff, he turned to the window. But at that moment Dick came to and immediately comprehended the situation. He leaped to his feet and rushed at Vickers.

CHAPTER IX.—Vickers Disappears.

"Great Scott, man! What are you doing?" cried Dick, seizing Vickers by the arm.

The rascal turned with a cry of dismay.

"You again!" he hissed. "Will you never cease to cross me?"

"Cross you, you scoundrel! You are firing the alarm. What has prompted you to commit such an infernal deed? Come now, help me put it out."

"Blame you! Take that!"

He struck with his fist at Dick, but the boy warded off the blow and grappled with him. At that moment a tremendous explosion shook the building, blowing the windows, front and rear, out of the paint shop, which was instantly converted into a sea of flame. The burning paint ran out into the hall like a blazing river. Thick, stifling smoke poured out of the

two windows. The explosion startled Nick and a policeman, and they looked around.

Vickers had broken open a door which led to a paintshop next-door, and then had sprinkled a lot of benzine on the floor and set fire to it. It was this which had caused the explosion.

It needed but a glance to show that the paint shop was on fire, and blazing furiously. The officer started on the run for the next corner, where there was a fire box, to turn in the alarm, while Nick, knowing that Dick was in the burning building, rushed across the street, expecting to meet him coming out. But he didn't come out and Nick rushed in to find him, though he was taking chances by doing so. In the meanwhile a desperate struggle was going on between Dick and Vickers. They swayed to and fro near the door of the drafting room.

Dick's foot caught on the sill and he lost his balance, pulling Vickers with him. The rascal's coat caught in the handle of the door and pulled it to with a bang. The two hung in the air for a fraction of a minute, then Vickers' coat became detached. With a shock that shook the room Dick and his enemy fell to the floor, the latter on top.

"Help! Help!" shouted the boy, realizing his disadvantage.

At that moment the door flew open, admitting Nick and a cloud of smoke.

"Holy smoke! What's all this?" cried Nick, when he saw the struggling pair.

"Help! help!" cried Dick, who found it impossible to shake off the desperate grip of Vickers, that rascal being determined to choke him to death if he could.

Nick did not recognize Vickers at first, but he knew that the under one was his chum and that was enough for him. He seized Vickers by the collar and pulled him backward. Dick rose from the floor with him, for the rascal did not let go his hold. Then Nick recognized the clerk.

"Vickers!" he cried, in astonishment. "You here? Let go of Danvers. What are you two scrapping about, with the building on fire? Let go, both of you!"

At this point Dick broke Vickers' hold on his throat, and that enabled Nick to pull the young scoundrel off his chum. With a howl of rage Vickers smashed Nick in the face, sending him staggering backward, then he dashed through the door into the blazing counting room that was full of stifling black smoke, threw up the window and blindly crawled out of it, and dropped into the yard.

He lost no time in getting over the fence into the alley and making off. Already the fire-alarm bell was sending its deep tones out upon the Sunday morning air, and a crowd of people were rushing in the direction of the smoke that indicated where the fire was. Several fire engines were on their way to the scene, and their clang and rush added to the general excitement. Dick and Nick realized that they were in a bad pickle, for the smoke was of such a stifling character that they could hardly see or breathe.

"Come on, Dick. We can't escape by the front way. Follow me through the manager's room to the exit on the side street," said Nick, opening the door beyond and dashing through it.

Dick followed him and shut the door to bar

out the smoke. They passed on into the ante-room beyond, which faced on the side street. The door was locked, but the key was in it, and it was a simple matter to turn it and shoot the two bolts. Nick did this and opened the door. Then they rushed out, and found a score of people already congregated at the corner, with many others running that way from all directions. Dick looked something like a wreck after his struggle with Vickers, and Nick, owing to his bandaged head, didn't look a whole lot better. When they reached the corner, the flames were in full possession of the paint shop and the floor above, and could be seen through the main entrance and through the blinds of the counting room.

"I'm afraid nothing will be saved in our place," said Dick, "or in the office above. You can stay and look on if you want to, but I've got to telephone the news to Mr. Kent. This is the second piece of hard luck the firm has been up against inside of twenty-four hours."

Dick started for the next corner, where he knew there was a public telephone, and was presently in communication with the manager. They only exchanged a few words, because the moment Mr. Kent learned the office was on fire he wanted to get to the scene without delay. Dick returned to the neighborhood of the fire, but he couldn't find Nick. Most of the engines were on hand by that time and they were soon at work. They had a job before them, and they finally got the flames under control, but not before the building was gutted from roof to cellar.

The ell, where Mr. Kent's room was, partially escaped the general ruin, and the firemen kept the blaze from encroaching on the adjacent buildings. The investigation by the fire chief, aided by the story of the policeman on that beat, showed that the fire had started with the explosion in the paint shop. There was a strong smell of benzine on the side occupied by the contracting firm, but this was not considered extraordinary under the circumstances, and until Dick told his story later to Manager Kent, who was amazed at the figuring of Vickers in the affair, no suspicions prevailed that the fire was of incendiary origin.

"You say that when you entered the counting room you found Vickers standing before the safe, the outer door of which was open?" said Mr. Kent.

"Yes, sir," said Dick.

"I had a poor opinion of Vickers, but I never thought him a rascal. He was trying to get at the money, of course, but I suppose he didn't succeed. The safe is now in the cellar, and I noticed that the outer door was shut, as it ought to be. You closed it after catching him in the act."

"No, sir, I did not. I had no chance to do it," and Dick told of the knockout he got from Vickers.

What happened until he recovered his senses he was ignorant of, he said, but when he returned to the counting room he found it on fire and Vickers spreading the blaze. He said the explosion in the paint shop followed, and narrated what happened between him and Vickers up to the fortunate appearance of his chum, when Vickers got away. Kent immediately took Dick to the police headquarter, where he told his

story over again, with the result that detectives were sent out to find and arrest Vickers. They failed to find him at his lodgings, but they discovered evidences there which showed that the clerk had made a hasty departure.

The police in the neighboring towns and cities were then requested to look out for him. Of course there was no work for the office force after the fire until new quarters had been hired and fitted up, and this took a little while. On Monday morning, however, as soon as the bank opened, Manager Kent drew the money necessary to pay off the road hands, and sent Dick with it in a hired car, with Nick as his body-guard.

The stolen money was not available because the police retained it as evidence against the four men who had committed the outrage. The road superintendent had learned all about the hold-up on Saturday afternoon, and sent an explanation to the laborers with the assurance that they would get their money Monday morning. Nick had recovered the payroll book from the wreck of the car, and so when he and Dick reached the ground they were ready to pay off. The men were at work and the superintendent did not care to have the men called off simply to get their pay, as it only wanted about twenty minutes of the noon hour. Dick and Nick dined with the superintendent at the hotel in the village and then returned to town.

CHAPTER X.—The Express Package.

Dick found a letter waiting for him. Much to his surprise, it was from his uncle. That gentleman had read about his nephew's strenuous experience in the pay car and the chase and capture of the four rascals, and, seeing that the boy had secured a good position without help, had come to the conclusion that he amounted to something, after all, notwithstanding his college escapade, and was now disposed to resume friendly relations with him.

"You're lucky," said Nick. "I wish my aunt would capitulate the same way."

"She probably will if you give her time," replied his chum.

"What are we going to do with ourselves for the next few days?"

"Give it up. I may call on my uncle and smoke the pipe of peace with him."

"I would since he seems disposed to let bygones be bygones."

The boys ascertained that their services would not be required for that week, so Dick packed his grip and started for his uncle's home. His uncle, whose name was Foster, lived in a fine house on the suburbs of Buffalo, and Dick received a cordial welcome. He told Mr. Foster all about his business experience with the firm of Bradley, Nichols & Co., and his uncle nodded his head approvingly.

"I guess you've sowed all of your wild oats, nephew," said Mr. Foster.

"I guess I have, for my head is now full of business ideas," said Dick.

"I'm glad to hear it. You'll find me willing to help you now."

"Thanks, uncle, but I guess I can get along without any help now. A chap never knows what he can do till he's put to it. You really did me a favor by making me hoe my own way. When I found I had to depend on my own resources, I got down to business, and the result is quite satisfactory to me. Still I would prefer to tackle some enterprise of my own to working for other people. A man never can make much money till he goes into something worth while on his own account."

"There's time enough for you to think of that, nephew. You're young yet. Get all the experience you can before you figure on branching out into your own business," said his uncle.

On the following day Dick learned from the papers that the cargo contractors of Buffalo had formed a coalition and made a demand for increased rates for the carrying of coal in particular across the lake to Canadian ports. This demand was being resisted by the shippers, and as a result no new contracts were being made. Outside of those who had current contracts still to complete the cargo contracting business was at a complete standstill. Dick made a tour of the wharves to investigate the situation, which interested him. At one dock he got into conversation with a man who had been in the business for many years, and he told the boy that the contractors were trying to work the squeeze game on the shippers.

"The season for shipping next winter's coal has just commenced, and the contractors think they have the shippers under their thumbs. To a certain extent they have, for they control lake traffic. But wait a bit till some smart chap comes along with a bit of money and stands in with the shippers; then the contractors will alter their tune," said the man.

"Is there money in the business at the old rates?" asked Dick interestedly.

"There's a fortune in it for those who can get freight right along."

"Let me know all the facts about the business."

"Are you a reporter?"

"No. I'm connected with a contracting firm in Sterling."

"Come here to investigate the situation, I suppose? Well, I'll put you wise to the facts from the ground floor up."

This he did, and for the next half hour Dick was busy making notes and asking questions. Then he called on the superintendent of a big coal shipping firm and had a talk with him. Dick, with consummate nerve, represented himself as the managing partner of the firm of Danvers & Norcross, which was thinking of embarking in the cargo contracting business at Buffalo, and he wanted to know what deal he could make with the shipping house for the exclusive privilege of carrying all their coal across the lake. The superintendent said the house was in the market at the old rates.

If a responsible contractor came along and offered to accept those rates, he would get the contract for the season. As an inducement to such an enterprising individual or firm, all wharf charges at both ends would be waived during the run of the contract. Dick found out all he could, and was satisfied that there was a fine opening for somebody. The scheme appealed to him, but

unfortunately he had no money. Nevertheless, he followed the matter up and found a large coal-carrying sloop for sale or charter.

The man who owned her had died two months previous, and the widow, as executrix of his will, wanted to sell or rent the vessel. Owing to the tie-up in the trade, she was willing to make easy terms. Dick found out what her terms were, and promised to consider the offer. He went back to his uncle's house, thought the matter out in all its bearings, and came to the conclusion that if he could raise \$1,000 he would resign from Bradley, Nichols & Co., get Nick to do the same, and go into the business with his chum. He believed it was a good thing, if properly worked, and that under existing conditions he and Nick ought to make a bunch of money. At lunch he outlined his plans to his uncle and asked him for the loan of \$1,000.

"You certainly have lots of nerve to think of embarking in a business you have had no experience in. You are not lacking in assurance, either, in asking me to back you up in the business."

"I don't want you to back me, only loan me a thousand dollars."

"Well, I will not deny your energy, and I guess you are ambitious; but I think you are trying to undertake something beyond your abilities."

"Nonsense, uncle. It's a good thing. It's a good idea for a fellow to grip hold of an opportunity when it comes his way."

"Certainly, if it's something he can hold on to."

"What's to prevent me and my chum holding on to this?"

"Your inexperience."

"We were as inexperienced as two kids when the manager of the contracting firm gave us the chance to show what we could do. We made good right off the reel."

"But that was a different proposition. You were taking no financial risk."

"And working for small wages."

"You have prospects of an increase."

"I know it; but I'm ambitious to do better, now that I see the chance that may not happen again. A new firm of cargo contractors, especially a young one, would stand no chance here if it wasn't for the tie-up. Here is the chance for Danvers & Norcross to get their hooks in."

Nothing more was said about the project, and Dick went out, feeling that a good thing was slipping away from him and his chum as well. That afternoon when he got back he received a letter from Nick. That lad was in high feather. He had ventured to call on his aunt, had been kindly received, and finally taken back into her good graces when she found he was doing well. Next afternoon Dick was walking along a side business street, where every other store in the block appeared to be devoted to the wholesale jewelry and silverware business, when an Adams express vehicle, drawn by a single horse and carrying two employees pretty well caged in, drew up before the entrance that led to the upper floors of one of the buildings.

The driver remained in the wagon while the other young man, opening a narrow iron gate behind the driver's seat, sprang out with a book and a moderate-sized package strongly done up and sealed in several places with red wax in

which was impressed the company's stamp. The man ran into the entrance and proceeded upstairs. Two smooth-faced chaps who were standing at the window of the jewelry shop adjoining the entrance held a brief exchange of words and then followed him. Somehow their actions struck Dick as being suspicious, and he stopped and looked up the stairs. Suddenly he heard a scuffle and a muffled cry for help. Satisfied something was wrong, he started upstairs, and reached the landing in time to see the expressman in the grasp of two men.

At that moment one of the fellows got the sealed package away from the expressman and started up the next flight two steps at a bound. The other held on to the expressman and appeared to be choking him. Dick jumped to his rescue. The lone rascal dropped the now unconscious expressman and turned to defend himself. The racket attracted the attention of a clerk from the loft on that floor and he wanted to know what was up.

"Robbery!" cried Dick. "Help me capture this fellow!"

The rascal didn't wait to be caught, but tearing himself free from Dick's grip ran down the flight and disappeared into the street. Dick did not attempt to follow him, but ran up the next flight to try and find the man who had got away with the package. There was no sign of him on the landing, and Dick kept on to the top floor. He was not there, but a short ladder to a scuttle suggested his line of retreat. The scuttle was closed, but Dick saw it was not caught on the under side, so he was satisfied that the thief had gone on the roof. He threw open the trap and looked around. The roofs of the adjoining buildings were all on a level, and it was an easy matter for any one to run along them in either direction to the corner and continue at a right angle as well.

Dick's inspection at first developed no one in sight up there. There were numerous wide chimneys, behind any one of which a man could conceal himself. Dick continued to look, first one way and then the other, without result. All at once he saw something flutter halfway to the corner, and made out that it was the end of a sack coat.

"I'll bet that chap is hiding behind that chimney. If he is, I'll have him out of there mighty soon," said the boy.

He stepped up on the roof, left the trap open and started for the chimney in question. The moment he did so a figure came from behind the chimney and started on the run across the roof.

"I thought you were there, you rascal!" muttered the boy, getting a gait on. "You were keeping a sharp lookout and saw me come up. If I can get my hands on you I'll make you give up that express package."

The fellow with the package proved pretty spry, however, and Dick was not able to overtake him at first. After a run halfway around the square, the rascal started to try the scuttles along the roofs, and that gave Dick a chance to close in on him. Finally he tripped over a low fire wall, and before he could get up Dick was on him. They had it hot and heavy for a few minutes, but Dick was an athlete and more than a match for the thief. During the strug-

gle the package got away from the fellow. Dick released him and pounced on it.

"Now you can go," said the boy. "This goes back to the express company."

"I'll remember you, young feller, and will fix you for this!" said the thief, with a scowl.

Dick paid no attention to him, but started for the building where the open scuttle was. The thief went in the opposite direction on the run. Dick did not suspect his object, but it soon developed. He beat the boy to the scuttle by half a block, disappeared down it, and closed it after him. When Dick reached it he found that it was fast. The thief had marooned him on the roofs.

The only thing Dick could do was to hunt for another scuttle that was not fastened. It took him some time to find one, and then he discovered that it opened into an empty loft and that he would have to drop ten feet to the floor. This he did, and succeeded in making his way to the street.

Dick took the package to the express office, where he was given \$2,500, the reward which the express company had offered. Dick now had money to start his coal carrying plan ahead. He immediately telegraphed Nick, who came on. He was enthusiastic over Dick's idea. Dick and Nick now signed articles of partnership and then got the contract with the Atlas Coal Company signed and settled. He then bought a sloop and had her at the coal company's chute and loaded up to start for Wellington.

CHAPTER XI.—Danvers & Norcross Have a Fight on Their Hands.

That afternoon when the sloop was waiting for the tug to come alongside to tow her away from the coal chute and start her on her way to Wellington, a young man stepped aboard and asked for the captain. The skipper, who was on deck, asked him what he wanted.

"Will you take me across the lake for a reasonable sum?" said the young man.

"Why don't you go by rail? You can go in a quarter of the time, if it's Wellington you want to reach. Besides, we don't take passengers, anyway," said the captain.

"The doctor has ordered me to take a water trip for my health."

"Then why not take the steamer for Cleveland or Toledo?"

"I don't like steamers."

"I don't admire your taste, when you pick out a dirty coal sloop."

"Oh, any kind of a sailing vessel suits me."

"Does it, now? Well, step over to Simmons Wharf. Maybe the captain of the schooner *Maria* will accommodate you. We have no accommodations for you."

The young man did not seem anxious to go over to the schooner *Maria*, which, not being in the coal-carrying business, presented a cleaner appearance. Just then the tug came up and the captain left him to attend to business. While the attention of all hands was engaged, the young man glided down into the cabin, and after remaining there a few minutes he came out and met Dick at the door.

"Hello, who are you?" said Dick.

"Me? Oh, my name is Smith," replied the young chap.

"What are you doing about this sloop?"

"Just brought a bundle to the captain from his wife."

"Oh, all right," said Dick, accepting his reply as the truth.

At that juncture the captain came up.

"You here yet?" he said to the young fellow. "Get ashore. Stir yourself, or you'll have to swim for it, for we're casting off."

The visitor took a flying leap and hurried up the narrow wharf.

"What do you suppose that chap wanted?" said the skipper to Dick.

"He brought a package to you from your wife, so he told me," said Dick. "I met him coming from the cabin."

"Coming out of the cabin? Why, confound his nerve. I wonder what took him there? He asked me to take him across the lake. He said his doctor had advised him to take a water trip for his health. I'd like to know what took him into the cabin. I believe he went there to steal something. Your coming probably spoiled his little game. I wish I'd caught him coming out; he'd have heard from me."

"Well, never mind him. Are we ready to start?"

"We are. I was only waiting for you to come aboard."

"I'm aboard now, so you cast off," said Dick, entering the cabin.

He sat down at the table and got out a bundle of papers to look them over. While he was thus engaged the sloop got under way. He was still employed consulting the papers and figuring away on a waste sheet when the tug cast off and the sloop proceeded under her own sail. Shortly afterward the captain came into the cabin. He walked across to a locker, but paused as he was about to open it.

"Did you bring a clock aboard, Mr. Danvers?"

"No. Why do you ask that question?"

"Because I hear the ticking of a clock."

"So do I. I supposed you'd brought one aboard."

"No. If that isn't a clock I can't imagine what it can be."

"It sounds over in that corner near the floor."

The captain went over to the spot and, looking down, discovered a small object covered with a piece of newspaper. He picked it up and tore off some of the paper. It wasn't a clock, but a tin box. The ticking came from the interior of it.

"Blamed if I can make out what it is," said the skipper. "There must be one of those small cheap clocks inside of it. I wonder who brought it aboard. I guess I'll open it and see. Nothing but a clock could make that ticking."

Dick stared at the tin case which the captain was about to open. Across his brain there flashed a suspicion that this thing might be a dynamite bomb, with a clockwork attachment for setting it off at a certain time. He snatched it out of the captain's hand, ran out of the cabin and threw it overboard. The tin box struck a floating piece of wood and exploded.

"It was a bomb," said Dick to the startled captain.

"A bomb!" ejaculated the skipper.

"You heard it explode, didn't you?"

"A deaf man might have heard that. How in thunder did it get in the cabin?"

"It strikes me that visitor we had brought it."

Dick told the skipper about the pay-car episode.

"I must say you've a good nerve," said the captain. "Why, if that thing had gone off in your hands there wouldn't have been enough of you left to sweep up."

"Well, don't say anything about it to the men, who are evidently wondering what caused the explosion in the water, or we might not be able to get them to stay with us after this trip."

"I won't say a word."

When he went on deck a little later one of the crew spoke to him about the explosion, but he professed the densest ignorance concerning it. The run was made in good time, the coal discharged, a load of shingles taken on at the wharf of the Wellington Lumber Company, and the sloop returned to Buffalo. Dick reported to Nick, and also to the manager of the Atlas Coal Company the attempt made to blow the sloop and cargo up, and told his suspicions concerning the authors of the outrage.

The police were notified, a description of the young man furnished them, and detectives were quietly put on the scent. When the shingles were unloaded the sloop was towed around to the coal chute to get her third load. The tie-up situation was unchanged, both sides standing by their guns. The coal shippers had succeeded in securing another sloop to carry their black diamonds across to the Canadian shore, and were running the vessels themselves. To that extent they had scored on the cargo contractors, but even at that, and the assistance they got from the miscellaneous small craft, they were only able to move a small part of the coal that usually went across. The firm of Danvers & Norcross were doing first rate. Nick told his chum that he had been waited on by a committee from the cargo contractors with a proposal that the new firm should join hands with them, and help bring the shippers to terms.

Nick said he had refused to consider any proposal without first submitting it to his partner, who was the manager, so the committee said they would call on Dick when he got back from across the lake. A watch was kept for the return of the Siren, and when she was docked to discharge the shingles the cargo contractors' committee called at the firm's office again and saw Dick. After their spokesman had had his say Dick proceeded to have his. He said that whatever his opinion might be on the justice of the cargo contractors' part, it was impossible for the firm to side with them, as he and his partner were bound by a contract to carry coal at the old rate, and they would have to carry out their agreement. The committee tried to get him to agree to break the contract, assuring him that the shippers were on the point of giving in, and that then his firm would come in for its share of the higher freight rates. Dick, however, positively refused to do what the committee wanted.

CHAPTER XII.—Conclusion.

The *Siren* sailed on her third trip without interference from the cargo contractors' combine. Whatever plans they had for putting the sloop and the young opposition firm out of business they judged it prudent not to put it in force just then, at any rate. The good thing that the chums had fallen into went along all right for the next two weeks, and their profits began to accumulate in their safe deposit box, since being under age they were unable to have a regular business account in any of the banks. The fight between the two factions had grown more bitter. Both sides were losing considerable money, but the shippers, perhaps, were better able to stand the loss.

At any rate, they were doing something through the two big sloops and a few small craft that the cargo contractors had not yet frightened off. The shippers had scoured the lakes for other contractors, but after making terms with them, the new people were intimidated or bought off, and the contracts were not carried out. The shipping combine had come to admire the stalwart front put up by the young firm which had first come to their aid, and which was sticking to them through thick and thin.

A resolution was passed complimenting the two boys and assuring them again that when a settlement was effected with the cargo contractors they would be taken care of independent of the signed contract to that effect. One afternoon the *Siren* returned late to Buffalo with a load of lumber and shingles. In order to facilitate the coal shipments, Danvers & Norcross were employing a night force to handle their lumber business on both sides of the lake. This reduced their profits somewhat, for they had to pay half as much again for labor, but the firm believed it would pay them in the long run to prove their willingness to aid the coal shippers in every way they could. The shippers when they saw this duly appreciated their efforts and told them they would lose nothing by it. Indeed, on vote it was resolved to reimburse Danvers & Norcross for the extra outlay, though they were in no way bound to do it. The young firm was so informed, and directed to send in the amount to the temporary treasurer and it would be paid without question.

The boys, however, declined to accept this concession. They said business was business, and all they wanted was the face of their contract in view of the fact that they were losing a certain amount of time to the coal people by reason of taking the return cargoes. On the afternoon in question, Dick, as soon as he landed, rushed off to the place where the men he hired congregated. Some of the men were there, but they refused to go to work. It didn't take Dick long to find out from his partner that the cargo contractors had at last succeeded in buying the men off by paying them the wages they would receive for their labor. This was a serious state of affairs to the young firm.

If they couldn't get laborers to unload their shingles and lumber in Buffalo, they would have to quit taking the return cargo, and they would be out their profits. Dick called on the manager

of the Atlas Coal Co. and asked him if he could help the firm out. As it was necessary to get the sloop around to the chute as soon as possible, the manager said he would draft some of his men for the purpose. The men objected to working that night on top of their day's toil, with the next day's labor in prospect, even if it was but half a day.

Besides, they said, they were not accustomed to handling lumber, and didn't want to do it. Their protest was reasonable and was finally allowed. Then Dick and Nick took the bull by the horns, went to a cheap lodging house and made an offer to the loungers there. They succeeded in getting half a dozen to go with them, and they marched their workers down to the wharf and put them at work with the members of the crew. The skipper and the two partners took off their coats and sailed in, too. Dick had taken the precaution to telephone for police protection to ward off possible trouble.

It was lucky he did so, for word was soon passed among the cargo men that the *Siren* was being unloaded by a miscellaneous gang, and they sent emissaries and a bunch of toughs to frighten them off. Dick and Nick saw the outsiders coming, and scented trouble. They posted themselves at the head of the wharf with revolvers and proceeded to bar admission to the enemy. This worked for a while, and then a rush was started to overthrow the two boys and throw them into the harbor. The foremost two were shot down by the boys, who were wound up for business, but that only turned the assault into a dangerous riot, and threats of vengeance were hurled at Dick and Nick as the ruffians tried to get at them on top of the lumber whither they had retreated and kept up a fire on the enemy, wounding several more.

The toughs hurled bricks and bottles at the boys, and they would have been slaughtered but for the arrival of the police contingent. The skipper and crew, in the meanwhile, were holding off the rascals from the sloop, which they threatened to burn, and the greatest excitement prevailed. The police, however, routed the enemy in a summary way with their clubs and then formed a line across the head of the wharf which prevented a renewal of the attack. The work of unloading then went on. Next morning the tug hauled the *Siren* around to chute of one of the coal shippers, and she began taking in her cargo. The boys spent most of the day in bed, but Dick was on hand to go away with the sloop as usual.

"I leave you the job of getting a force of men to unload on my return," said Dick to his partner. "Better be careful in making your selections, and work as quietly as you can, for the opposition will certainly try to do us."

The cargo contractors' combine were now hot after the young firm, but the members of it were afraid to proceed to extremes. They knew that if they put the sloop out of business they would be looked on as the persons who engineered the job. It wasn't that they cared for that, but they did care for the consequences in case their tools were caught and forced to confess. So they looked around for somebody who could be thoroughly depended on. They found such a person in Hen Vickers, who had drifted to Buffalo after losing all of his ill-gotten money. He was down

on his luck and desperate enough to undertake anything, particularly when he learned it was directed against Danvers & Norcross, whose presence in Buffalo in a business of their own was a great surprise to him.

When the sloop came back with a load of shingles, Nick had a gang of men ready to unload. Among them was a bearded man, whose natural complexion had been bronzed by the costumer's art and made to look older than it really was. This man was Vickers, and he secured work with Danvers & Norcross without being recognized by Nick. Work proceeded under Nick's supervision, Dick having gone to his uncle's. At midnight work was stopped for an hour, and Nick provided a supper for the gang. The bearded man ate with the others and then he disappeared. His absence was not noted, or at least no one thought anything of it.

In the meanwhile Nick had gone into the hold to see how much stuff remained to be discharged. While he was there he saw the bearded man sneak down in a suspicious way; being alive to danger from an unexpected quarter at all times, he watched the man. Vickers looked cautiously around, and, not seeing Nick, and believing the coast was clear, he took a bundle from under his coat, opened it and took out a lot of highly inflammable cotton waste which had been specially prepared beforehand. He shoved this in between two piles of shingles and struck a match. The next instant he received a stunning blow on the head from Nick's fist that stretched him out as flat as a pancake. His beard became disarranged, and Nick, seeing it was false, snatched it off and saw who the rascal was.

"Henry Vickers!" he cried.

"Yes!" hissed the scoundrel, jumping up and drawing a small bulldog revolver. "But you shall not live to expose me."

He shoved the gun against Nick's left breast and pulled the trigger. But a kind Providence was watching over the boy at that moment. The cartridge proved to be defective, and did not explode when the hammer hit the cap. It was the only thing that saved Nick's life.

"Hard luck!" gritted Vickers, trying to recock the weapon.

But his chance was gone. Nick knocked him down and pounded him into unconsciousness, and then he was handed over to the police. He was sent to Sterling to stand trial for his crimes there, and the attempted crime aboard the sloop was held back to be brought later, insuring him a long term in State prison. The rest of the night passed without event. That was the last attempt made against Danvers & Norcross by the cargo contractors' combine.

Before the sloop returned from Wellington on her next trip the contractors threw up their hands and agreed to accept the old rate. That ended the tie-up, and the water front of Buffalo resumed its wonted activity. An effort was made to cut out the young firm by the old ones, but the shippers vetoed it. Further, Danvers & Norcross got the tip to secure another sloop, and they would be given all the hauling they could attend to.

They didn't lose any time in attending to the matter, and within a few days added the *Calliope*

sloop to their business, and their profits increased in proportion. If we had the space, we could show how the college chums grew rich in their business venture, but as we have not, we must leave the reader to follow their successful career in his imagination.

Many years have elapsed since the events we have narrated, and Dick and Nick are now on the top rung of the cargo contracting business of Buffalo. Dick became heir to his uncle's wealth and Nick to his aunt's, and the addition of this money to their resources helped them ahead; but still their whole success started from the first piece of good luck in striking a good thing.

Next week's issue will contain "AMONG THE 'SHARKS'; or, THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF WALL STREET."

DAD HELPS SOLVE PROBLEM

Johnny having been absent from school for two days his teacher, who takes more than a perfunctory interest in her pupils, stopped at his house, on her way home, to inquire the cause.

"It's all along of that problem he brought home with him Monday evening," explained the worried looking woman who opened the door and who declared herself to be Johnny's mother. "He and his father are still a-working of it out."

"Why, what do you mean?" the puzzled teacher questioned. "Johnny had no problem that would require more than five minutes or so to work out."

The mother stared.

"I guess you have forgotten, Miss," she said. "Johnny and his father have been a-working on it steady since 7 o'clock yesterday morning, and they ain't finished yet, though dad said he hoped they would get through to-day, and I hope so, too, because dad has to take all this time off from his work, and I don't see how we can afford for him to lose any more time."

"There is evidently a misunderstanding somewhere," the teacher announced, positively. "Let me see the problem you are talking about."

The worried mother promptly produced a scrap of paper on which was written in Johnny's uncertain script:

"If it is one and seven-eighths miles from a man's home to the place where he works, and he walks the distance twice each day six days a week, moving at an average speed of three and five-sevenths miles an hour, how much time will he consume in walking back and forth in two weeks?"

"We decided," the wife and mother continued, "that it would be just the same thing if the man made twelve round trips one right after the other, instead of spreading them out over two weeks. As Johnny isn't a man yet there was nobody but his dad to work out the problem, and he's been doing it as fast as he could, Johnny going along to act as timekeeper, because it is terrible hard, dad says, to be sure you are walking just exactly three and five-sevenths miles an hour. They had to stop a while this morning to get their shoes half-soled, and that threw them behind, else they might have had the problem worked out by now."

The caller simply gasped, and the mother sighed.

CURRENT NEWS

CYCLING IN FRANCE

Cycling, which is practically a dead art in the United States, as far as use of the wheel for "recreation purposes" is concerned, is more popular than ever in France. With 4,308,129 bicycles in commission, there is a wheel to every ninth man, woman and child in France. In 1920 there were only 2,272,324.

FLOATING FISH POND

When the steamship *George Washington* sailed the other day for a three-months' cruise of the Mediterranean it carried a special tank filled with various varieties of fresh fish. When fish is ordered in the dining rooms, the chef will telephone the aquarium. The fish will be caught, killed, prepared and served while the guests waits, an epochal idea in steamship service. Aboard were eighty-four millionaires.

QUAIL BEING FED BY FARMERS

Driven from their usual winter haunts by unusual snows and bitter weather, hundreds of big mountain quail are being fed at Murphys, Cal., and in the neighborhood.

They have taken refuge on porches of vacant houses, in stables and poultry houses. Nor do they seem to be in the least afraid, seemingly knowing that they will be protected.

Game Commissioner Roberts has been carrying grain to flocks in various parts of town for

a week, while out in the country farmers are feeding the flocks gathered around their stables by the score.

BERLIN POST-OFFICE OPENS PRIVATE MAIL

The newspaper *National-Tidende* gives an instance of the tampering by German authorities with foreign mails passing through Germany.

A foreigner living in Denmark, the newspaper says, received a few days ago a registered letter which had passed through Berlin. The letter contained nothing but family news, though from the address the impression might have been obtained that it contained political information. On its arrival here the envelope contained not only the letter, but also a German Post-Office form, from which it was evident that the envelope had been opened and the letter read and put back again. But through the carelessness of an employee the form had also been enclosed.

The place of the origin of the form, which is a printed circular containing details of the letter, is Postüberwachungstelle (Postal Supervision Department), Berlin, W. S. This seems to show that each post-office in Berlin has its own department for controlling the mails. The form is signed "Prüfer No. 60" (Examiner No. 60).

There are thus, apparently, at least 60 controllers of the mails in Berlin.—*Brooklyn Eagle*.

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Daring Dan Dobson

— OR —

THE BOY WHO BEAT THE MOONSHINERS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

A man was beckoning to them wildly.

"Come here!" he cried, and they directed their tired horses toward him. "Waal, as I live, it is Dan Dobson!"

"Why, Uncle Zach!" cried Dan, as he recognized the old fellow who had been his faithful guide into the bad country. "As I live, and where did you come from?"

Zachary laughed merrily.

"My boy, I jest slipped outen the hands of them rascallions while they was pattin' themselves on the back, as to how clever they was to cotch me. I'm too expert a old snake to trap with one set of sticks. But I thought ye was done for. I sent word to your father, and I reckon he's got the crape on the door by this time."

Dan slid down from his horse very stiffly, as he talked with Zachary, and he introduced the young mountaineer who had been instrumental in his escape.

"Waal, I reckon Dan Dobson's dad will jest build a monument fer you," laughed Zach. "You shore did fool that Newcastle."

"Well, he may have to build a monument for us all—in the local cemetery at that—for we are not safe yet. This miserable settlement is all in sympathy with Newcastle, so Tom tells me," averred Dan Dobson.

"Huh! Waal, I kin take ye to a safe place—an old friend o' mine," said Zachary Shank—"the wisest man in the hull region of Newell's Ford. And he's the man that'll help us cotch this yere Jake Newcastle some day. His name is Oleander Clendenning. And he owns the funniest hotel ye ever seen in yer life."

"We'll have ter go easy," said Dingle.

"Ye jest foller me, and ye won't worry," answered Zachary Shank. He led them on along the lane which Tom had pointed out. But instead of going into the settlement, he stopped at a funny old cabin which was very long.

"What's this place?" asked Dan in surprise.

"This is Clendenning's Hotel. It's built in two counties. He runs a bar, but he don't pay no license. He has a cigar license for the year 1863, and that's all that Oleander needs fer doing business. When one official comes ter arrest him—his house being jest on the line—he simply moves down to ter end of the cabin and he's outer range."

"Is it a moonshine place?" asked Dan.

"Waal, not exactly. Old Oleander, he'd die of a busted heart if he had to give up his trade, and

he's as honest as they make 'em. He ain't no sympathy fer Newcastle, but livin' in the peculiar location he does, why he jest makes a dishonest penny now an' then, and we don't blame him. But he's a friend of mine, and that'll save our lives if they was an army of moonshiners on our trail."

They went into the long cabin, and discovered that it only had two large rooms.

They were introduced to old Clendenning, who was a strange looking man indeed, but one whom a fellow had to like from the minute of meeting.

He hid their horses down in a glen, in the next county—a hundred yards away. It was well he did. Then he made them as fine supper of rough but welcome food, and he put them to bed in the loft over his double-edged bar-room.

Soundly the lads slept after their terrible ordeal.

Next morning they were wakened by a warning touch from old Zachary.

"Sssh!" he cautioned in their ears.

Below them, through the rafters which formed the floor of Oleander's second story, they heard a familiar voice.

"I'll burn 'em at the stake, the dogs!" rasped the voice of Jake Newcastle. "You had better tell me the truth, Clendenning, you cur."

"See yere, Jake Newcastle; I ain't one o' yer gang, and ye'd jest better choke up that sassy talk. I'm a old man, an' I don't stand no part cussin' from a young pup that I used to do favors fer when he was a kid. Git outen yere. Ye ain't got no gratitude ner nothin' else but cussedness left in ye. Git, or I'll blow the top of yer curly purty oiled-up dude head off with this old Sally shotgun o' mine; right now!"

Newcastle was convinced, and he started for the door.

"That's right, Oleander. I'd forgotten what ye did for me when I was a youngster. If they ain't been seen here, I'll look further on with my men. That Dingle left me tied up for twelve hours, and I don't stand that from any man. I'll hound 'em down with bloodhounds, if need be."

Newcastle and his men, clattering away on horseback, left the scene.

Dan and Tom did not let his coming interfere with their breakfast appetite.

"Now, I'm going back to my father and head off any chance of his signing away his land to save my life," said Dan to Clendenning, to whom they had told everything. "And then I'm coming back here and clean out Newcastle and his army of ruffians if I have to bring the bluecoats with me."

Oleander laughed.

"I reckon about that time I'll move outen the county, and buy me a railroad or a steamboat and live on it, 'cause Jake Newcastle'll find out who is responsible fer his trouble at missin' ye today."

"Say, Mr. Clendenning, are you sorry you saved us?" asked Dan.

"No!"

"Then, I'll tell you honestly and frankly that there won't be any Newcastle gang left around here, and I don't say that braggingly. I have a new system to work on them next time."

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

RICH RADIUM ORE IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

There is a large radium content in the uranium ore found at Jachymov, in Bohemia, near the frontiers of Saxony, writes United States Trade Commissioner Donald L. Breed from Prague, Czecho-Slovakia. Although the radium production in the United States is greater as to quantity, the ores of Jachymov are richer in quality. The known supply of radium in the Jachymov district will last for twenty years, at the present rate of production. As there are three large mines which are not yet prospected as to depth, and in which the veins of ore widen as they are followed deeper, it is certain that the mining will continue for much more than twenty years.

The annual quantity of radium produced amounts to about two grams. The net profits to the Government in 1913 were about 1,000,000 crowns. The net profit anticipated for the current year is about 3,500,000 crowns, which, of course, has less foreign exchange value than the pre-war profits. The price of one gram of radium in the home market in 1913 was 588,000 crowns. To-day the price of one gram is about 10,000,000 crowns.

COUGAR DIED AFTER LONG FIGHT FOR LIFE

A man, three dogs and a big cougar engaged in a frightful battle near Husum, Wash., in the foothills of Mount Adams, according to Gus Olsen, who is under doctors' care for several dozen deep cuts on his body.

Olsen, seeking a cougar guilty of robbing him of several calves, started three experienced hunting dogs on the trail and they intercepted the furious animal in a hollow. The cougar backed upward into a low hanging cedar and coolly faced the dogs, which went after it from all sides.

The first dog within range of the sharp claws of the big cat had its head nearly severed and the second dog to launch an offensive was ripped open from end to end. The third plucky dog was sailing into the flying claws of the cougar when Olsen arrived and fired.

Thinking the animal dead, Olsen reached for its tail to pull it from the tree. The cougar suddenly became a dynamo of destruction and in a few minutes had torn Olsen's clothing to shreds and left him bleeding from several dozen deep scratches.

Olsen was entirely exhausted when the cougar fell dead from the slow effects of the bullet in its legs.

LARGE SUM IN BOUNTY FOR WOLF AND COYOTE

As a result of the bounty of \$2 for each coyote or wolf which was offered by the Commissioners' Office of Bailey county, Tex., many of these predatory animals have been killed during the last few months.

Only a few days ago two professional trappers,

U. F. King and W. C. Murray, brought in 165 scalps of coyotes, for which they received \$330. These scalps were the result of five weeks' work. In addition to the money that they received from the scalps they sold the skins of the animals for an average of \$3 each, making their total income from the five weeks' work \$825. Besides the killing of coyotes and wolves by these two men many cowboys made neat sums from the sale of scalps and skins.

Although the campaign against wild animals which infest the ranches of West Texas is being carried on on an extensive scale it will be several years before entire relief is obtained from their depredations, it is expected. Upon many of the larger ranches, professional trappers and hunters are constantly employed. These men spend their time hunting and killing Mexican panthers, lobo wolves and coyotes.

It has been estimated that one Mexican lion upon a ranch will slay enough calves and grown cattle in the course of a year to pay the salary of half a dozen professional hunters. The same is almost true of a big wolf. The coyotes will attack and kill very young calves and sheep, and are especially destructive to ranch house poultry.

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The Young Trappers

By COL. RALPH FENTON

"Talk about boys not having fun, ingenuity and business in their heads all at once, will you?" remarked old Tom Gregg, the borderman, as he, Kemply, Hemphill and myself, along with several others, were seated by a glowing campfire on the banks of the Upper Missouri. "Why, I'll take a boy in preference to a man for thinking up genuine, real deviltry, and in inventing new tricks and trades. I, Thomas Gregg, know whereof I speak. I, hunter and trapper, have been there, and if you just want to have things lively as a hornet's nest, I'll recommend that you get in with a brace of rollicking, riproaring boys.

"Let me tell you my experience with a pair of them.

About ten years ago I was trapping all along up on the Yallerstun, when one day along came two trapper-boys, mounted on ponies, with an outfit for trapping.

"Their names were Joe Beems and Lee Shepherd, and I took them in for the night, and before morning they took me in—into partnership with them in the trapping business.

"They proved to be sharp as aquafortis, and reckless as a mule's heel, and so we went to work.

"I tell you what, the firm of Greggs, Beems & Shepherd made the fur fly like sixty; and once in a while a little hair would come with it, for them tormenting boys would peel an Indian's head every chance they got.

"They did it for revenge, for the reds had killed their friends; but I told them we should have to dissolve if they didn't quit it, but I might as well have talked about dissolving a rock in water.

"You can't break a boy of having fun no more than you can harness lightning to a gig; and so they went on trapping beavers and pestering the heads of the redskins until the whole Indian lot began to give us fun.

"One day they captured me and Joe Beems, and hustled us off towards their stronghold.

"When night came on, of course they camped in the woods, and tied us up to trees.

"They made a fire, eat their food, and smoked their pipes; then all but one laid down to sleep, while little Joe and me were left standing there, straight as stone images.

"I wasn't thinking anything about Lee Shepherd till I suddenly heard the far-off scream of a wildcat, and saw Joe look at me and wink, and then snigger to himself.

"Well, about ten minutes had slid into eternity, when all of a sudden something came crashing through the shrubbery and rolled into the heart of the camp.

"A glance told me what it was! it was my favorite beehive—a light bark concern, and a swarm inside that I set a great store by, for they were the best workers that ever sucked dew from a wild flower or manufactured beeswax."

"And were the bees in it?" asked Kemply.

"It it? I reckon they were; but they didn't stay long after the hive rolled into the camp.

"The minute it hit the ground they rushed out in platoons, humming, hissing and buzzing, and oh, goodness! if ever you saw a lively time, it was then and there.

"Of course, the little sharp-tailed varmints bounced captors and captives alike, and how they did pepper their javelins into us!

"Joe and me stood our ground, because we couldn't help ourselves; but the Indians undertook to fight them; and how the little honey-makers did scorch it to the red varmints!

"To add to the commotion, Lee Shepherd came running into camp, screaming like a painter, and the whole kit of Indians lit out, supposing the Old Scratch had bounced them.

"The next minute Joe and me were free, but it's an actual fact, Lee had to lead us home, for we were stung blind."

"The remedy was worse than the disease," laughed Hemphill.

"Yes; but you see, Lee had fun and business combined.

"The little rascal had wrapped the beehive in a blanket, and carried it ten miles just to—to—well, it was all right the way it turned out.

"But scarcely was the swelling out of my eyes before six more Indians swooped down upon our ranch and took me a prisoner; and in order to elude pursuit by the young avengers, Joe and Lee, they took a different route homeward—went across the Big Prairie, as we called it, where the grass was so deep and thick that one would think it impossible to follow a trail.

"The boys had gone off that morning on horseback, and were not likely to be back for a day or two, and so I, Thomas Gregg, hunter and trapper, made myself easy on one thing, and that was death.

"Night overtook us on the prairie—a dark, gloomy night, and so my captors halted to wait till the moon came up.

"As the reds supposed they were out of reach of human eyes they struck a fire.

"As they had no fuel but buffalo-chip, they had no light but that given off by the red coals.

"The chips would not blaze, so our light was a feeble affair, yet sufficient for me to distinguish the devilish look of triumph on my captors' faces.

"They made me sit down, and then tied my arms together under my legs; so I sat all humped up like a frog in a thunderstorm.

"Then the reds sat down around the fire and smoked and talked, and waited for the moon; and there they sat, when, suddenly, a strange sound out upon the prairie started every dog of them to his feet.

"I didn't get up, for the reason I couldn't; but next moment I heard a 'swish, thung—thung,' in the grass, and then something struck me across the breast, and knocked me reeling over.

"A yell of dismay burst from the redskins' lips, and when I again got straightened up I saw the Indians were standing looking into the darkness with horror painted upon their visages.

"Not one of them, or me either, for that matter, knew what had struck us; and while I was cogitating over the mystery, I again heard that dreadful sound like the sweep of a serpent, and

at the same instant I saw the feet of an Indian pop out from under him, and the fellow came down like a log, flat on his face; and scarcely was he down before every savage's heels flew out from under him and he came to earth with a whoop!

"I thought some of them were bursted, and I expect I should have laughed if that same invisible hand had not given me a rip in the side and knocked every Indian sprawling flat.

"And then they were scarcely up again before down they went, howling as if with mortal agony and superstitious horror.

"At the same moment something struck me across the lower extremity of the jacket, and doubled me over until my nose touched the toe of my moccasins.

"Before I could straighten out I felt myself being dragged backwards along the earth as if a team of double-gearred lightning was harnessed to me.

"Heavens and earth! how I was snatched through the grass!

"Green as the verdure was it fairly smoked!

"How far I was pulled along I don't know, nor do I want to know; but I was finally permitted to come to rest, and now, what do you suppose had dragged me?"

"I can't imagine," said I.

"I was a rope—I was actually doubled over a rope like a pair of bags over a close-line."

"A rope!" Bently exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes; a rope forty rods long nearly, to each end of which them infernal boys, Joe and Lee, had a pony hitched, and, with the animals' feet muffled, had been galloping up and down the prairie—one on each side of the camp—dragging the middle of the rope across the camp and then back, like lightning, while they were unseen in the darkness.

"So you see what the earthquake was that was knocking the trotters from under the redskins, and got me out of their clutches that time.

"I didn't sit down for a month after that slide backwards over the prairie, doubled over a rope with a horse on each end of it, and a lump of animated deviltry on each horse. But boys will be boys, say what you will.

FOXES OF LONG ISLAND

The report of the discovery of foxes in the vicinity of Valley Stream, L. I., by hunters during the past season, verified by Game Warden David Benson, who saw one of the creatures, in addition the presence of tracks in the snow one day closely resembling those of a fox strongly indicates that despite the efforts of gunners to exterminate foxes on Long Island, they are still holding their own even in comparatively large numbers.

That the foxes observed at Valley Stream may have come from a section of the island where they are found in large numbers, seems quite possible; and yet, only a year ago, several hundred small chickens owned by a resident of Cedarhurst were killed in a single night by foxes, although the

home is located in a section of the village where many houses are situated. One of the foxes was killed, but the others escaped. The one shot by the posse who conducted an exhaustive search for the remaining members of the pack, was a red fox, and apparently not more than a few months old.

According to the reports of hunters who have been gunning on Long Island the foxes are plentiful in many sections from Deer Park east. At Oakdale several have been observed, according to Game Warden Benson.

In years back foxes were plentiful as far east as Montauk Point, but the cutting away of the trees and the development of sections where they made their homes has reduced the number inhabiting Long Island to a comparatively low figure. However, it is the opinion of many that the number of foxes on Long Island this year is greater than that of last year.

It would be a difficult matter to attempt to estimate the number of foxes inhabiting Long Island by observation on account of their sly characteristics and dexterity in finding obscure hiding places in virtually any emergency. The fox's ability as a traveler is almost uncomparable. His instincts are far more keen than the majority of the fox family and his art of evading pursuers often of such cunning nature that even the most experienced naturalist or hunter is deceived. His coat is of a golden red and when traveling about the dead autumn leaves, it frequently takes a very sharp eye to detect his presence.

It is by no means an uncommon occurrence for a fox to feign death when captured and then submit to the roughest of handling without flinching. The creature's home is usually located in a dry burrow in a rock and frequently consists of an outer hole or room, where the fox lies, a store-room, where he keeps his food, and behind all, his sleeping room and place where his family lives.

The foxes all have straight, bushy tails, erect ears and are voracious in appetite, devouring birds, small quadrupeds, fruits, honey and eggs.

In some places the fox's fondness for mice and rats has led some persons to believe that the damage he does to the poultry yard is repaid in his destruction of the rodents. However, comparatively few persons have assumed this attitude, and so it is no wonder that few of the creatures caught by farmers eating either mice or chickens ever reach home.

Thus far very few complaints of the slaughter of game on Long Island by foxes have been reported. Game Warden Benson stated the other day that although the number of animals and fowl remained unnoticed, apparently, it was still early in the season and that the slaughter of as many, if not more game birds and animals than were killed by the foxes last year was not improbable with so many inhabiting the island.

"Son, why don't you play circus? It's great fun. First you make a sawdust ring." "Where'll I get any sawdust, dad?" "Here's the saw. Just saw some of that cordwood into stove lengths. You can have all the sawdust you make."

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, MARCH 31, 1922

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

ELUDES ALL HUNTERS

A big silver fox, whose fur is valued at \$2,000 by woodsmen who have seen him, was observed near Lobachsville, Pa., recently.

The animal is believed to be the same one seen several years ago at Rockland and in the Oley Valley, eluding all efforts to trap him.

Hunters and trappers all over the Lobachsville region are hunting the fox in the hope of capturing him. The animal is of great size and his fur and brush are said to be magnificent in markings and color.

A WILD WOMAN

F. P. Mitchell, field man for a petroleum company, has arrived at Booneville, Ky., from the Owsley County mountain territory bearing wounds which will keep him disabled for some time. He will probably be scarred for life.

Mitchell says he was attacked by a wild woman. She was armed with a knife, or razor, and rushed at Mitchell, slashing him several times on the hands.

Mitchell notified the officers, and a posse was sent after the woman, but no trace of her could be discovered. Mitchell says she was half clad and presented the appearance of having wandered a long time in the mountains. Many persons have seen the woman, but so far as is known, Mitchell is the only person she has attacked.

TELLS OF DISCOVERY OF RUSTLESS IRON

One of the most important achievements in modern metallurgy is the discovery of rustless iron. The announcement of the discovery was made by Dr. Miller Reese Hutchinson at Cooper Union before the alumni association of that institution. Dr. Hutchinson, inventor and member of the war-time Naval Consulting Board, gives the credit for the invention of rustless iron to W. B. Ballantine, an English metallurgist.

The new process makes iron or steel absolutely rustproof. The discovery makes it possible for the manufacture of rustless cutlery, art metal

work, hot water bottles, bathroom fittings, engine fittings, bicycle parts, bolts and nuts, cooking utensils, stoves and ranges, radiators and railway fittings.

The constant necessity for repairing iron work will be eliminated. The new material is known as chromium. It is found in its crude state in many parts of the world.

One of the biggest uses to which this new discovery can be put is in the building of ship hulls. It will not be necessary to dock the ship for repainting and scraping of the hull, as marine growth will not adhere to plates rolled from rustless iron, Dr. Hutchinson declares.

Charles M. Schwab has expressed the belief that if the material could be applied to the manufacture of steel and steel products there would be a big market for it, although the price may be double that of galvanized sheet and wire.

LAUGHS

Gaso—What is your machine, a runabout?
Lene—I guess so. It will only run about two minutes.

Young Lady—Please show me some ties. Clerk—A gentleman's tie? Young Lady—Oh, no! It is for my brother!

Harduppe—That fellow Bjones must have money. Borrower—So must I. Introduce me to him.

"Hubby, am I as dear to you now as when we were courting?" "Not as dear, wifey, but more expensive."

They were talking about trees. "My favorite," she said, "is the oak. It is so noble, so magnificent in its strength! But what is your favorite?" "Yew," he replied.

Tody—Jennie tells me young Woody proposed to her last night. Viola—I don't think I know him. Is he well off? Tody—He certainly is. She refused him.

"I never could understand why people dock their horse's tails," said Dubleigh. "High cost of living," said Jorrocks. "Got to dock something, these times."

"Papa, how many men have been President of the United States?" "Twenty-six, I think Kitty." "How many of them are alive now?" "Two." "Why, it's almost certain death, isn't it?"

"What is going on?" asked the terrified stranger in Central America. "Revolution," replied the man in the uniform. "Who is the leader of the rebels?" "Don't know yet. That's what this fight is about."

Irate customer—You said this cloth was a fast color, yet it faded in two weeks after it was made up. Draper—Well, I don't think you ought to expect it to fade any faster than that.

FROM ALL POINTS

OLD COINS DEPOSITED

A collection of coins, totalling about \$30, many of which were green with age, was deposited in the Seymour National Bank, Seymour Ind., a few days ago.

The coins were made in the early part of the eighteenth century and one bore the date of 1801. Practically all were 50-cent pieces and are much larger than coins of that denomination now minted.

The owner, it is thought, had saved the coins in the belief that a premium would be offered, but was forced to spend them. As the coins were larger than standard money the bank found difficulty in handling them and passed them out in the usual course of business.

CURIOSITIES OF THE BRITISH PATENT OFFICE

Some recent curiosities patented in England are described by the Illustrated London News. There are two head washing caps, one of which is an inverted metal bowl with a rubber ring that fits it tightly to the head and a spigot by which it may be attached to a rubber tube; the other is a helmet-like device with an inlet for water at the top and an outlet back of the neck.

Others are an automobile for use on land or water. It has a propeller and a detachable hull, while the fore wheels are encased and act as a roller.

Then there is a railway train fitted with a conveyor passing from the smokestack over the roofs of the cars to the rear of the train, through which smoke vapor and cinders are conveyed.

For bathing the face there is a basin with a recessed end for supporting the neck, and a detachable tube through which the bather may breathe while soaking her complexion in the water.

A protective garment for motorists and others is made of a double fabric containing shock absorbers in the form of hollow rubber balls.

Another ingenious person patents a buffer to be placed on the bows of ships so as to lessen the shock of collision. Bent plates fitting the converging sides of the ship support heavy spiral springs projecting forward to a steel plate that rests across the bows.

WIRELESS RECEIVER IN MATCH BOX

The smallest wireless receiver on record has been made by Kenneth R. Hinman of Plainfield, N. J., a boy only thirteen years old. All the apparatus except for the headphones is confined within the dimensions of a regular safety match-box. With it he is able to receive not only telegraphic signals but the music, stories, sermons and news items given out by the broadcasting station twenty and thirty miles distant.

The youthful inventor has reduced his miniature set to the simplest possible terms. Wrapped around the outer shell of the match-box is a coil of wire which serves as a tuning coil. In the drawer of the box is a crystal detector of the

"cat whisker variety." The drawer is provided with a spring finger which bears against the coil of wire; the insulation is scraped off along the path of the spring finger, which is moved in or out of the shell more or less. Resistance is introduced into the circuit, thus tuning the instrument for different wave lengths. No battery is necessary. The instrument is provided with spring clips, which may be made fast to a brass bed or a fence wire.

Almost since the days when he was "knee-high to a grasshopper" this young inventor has shown marked skill in producing things minute and mechanical. While little more than a baby—in his kindergarten days—on his own initiative he cut out of paper and pasted together without previous drawing a velocipede, complete as to pedals and handle bars and wheels on a scale so small as to cause all who saw it to marvel.

Among his early experiments was a microphone so connected by wire as to convey quite audibly at a distance or upstairs the ticking of the dining room clock. Once he surreptitiously ran a wire to the house next door where lived a small boy, with whom he arranged to operate a home-made spring key which should cause a ticker on the windowsill in his own home to chirp cricket fashion much to the mystification of his elders.

GEOLOGIST ESCAPES CANNIBALS

To be wounded by a band of head hunters while prospecting for oil is not the experience of all geologists graduated from the University of Oklahoma, but that is the experience of Grady Kirby of the 1915 class. Kirby, formerly with the Venezuela Oil Company of Maracaibo, recently returned to the United States and told his experience.

Kirby was one of a party which included Harrison Dixon, an engineer of New York, and six Venezuelan natives, that was sent out by the Venezuela Oil Company to make a geological survey of the mountainous regions drained by the Araquiza River.

The party left Maracaibo and went up the Araquiza River in cedar canoes. After going up the river 300 miles it reached a wild unexplored region in the mountains of Venezuela. While attempting to land the party was attacked by a band of cannibals, according to Kirby.

Bows and arrows as tall as the warriors were used by the head hunters. The arrows had barbed hard wood heads and had been dipped in poison. The natives knew nothing of firearms and were excited by the rifles carried by the explorers.

The cannibals prevented the landing of the party, which was forced to abandon the expedition, Kirby tells. To make speed in going down the river the party threw twenty days' supply of rations into the stream.

"We succeeded in killing two of the head hunters," explained Kirby, "but I was wounded slightly in the knee." He does not expect to return to South America and especially not to the mountains of Venezuela.

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

PRISONERS OF MOORS GET ONE MEAL A DAY

Details of the horrible fate of Spanish prisoners in the hand of rebellious Moroccans were given in a letter from Lieut. Estiban Gilaberte. He asserts that for the past month the prisoners had received only one insufficient meal a day, and that they are deprived of light, ventilation, exercise and hygienic arrangements. He says the captives are literally covered with vermin.

Abd-el-Krim, the rebel chieftain, has told the prisoners, says the letter, that henceforth he will be unable to prevent this lamentable treatment.

ELEPHANTS RAID A STATION

We are used to stories of how an elephant occasionally upsets a circus, but it is rare we hear of an orgy of destruction like that which occurred in the Malay Peninsula. A herd of wild elephants attacked a railway station, pulling down the station master's kitchen and bathroom. They did the same to the clerk's quarters and then tackled the station while the office force looked on from trees. One elephant took off an automatic weighing machine as a souvenir of the raid, but finding it heavy, threw it down on the track. One of the elephants trumpeted the recall and they all went back into the jungle except one who fell in a well and had to be got out by human aid, but was not detained. By the time help arrived after a general telegraphic alarm the huge beasts had entirely disappeared.

AN ELECTRIC COTTON PICKER

The cotton industry, in which human labor has played the important role for the 4,000 or more years that cotton has been picked by hand, promises to become revolutionized by the advent of an electrically operated picker, which has recently been perfected and placed in practical operation on a plantation at Little Rock, Ark., in the heart of the northern cotton belt.

This new electric device makes it possible for a person to gather from 400 to 700 pounds of cotton a day, as compared with 70 to 150 by hand. And by so doing it promises to solve the greatest problem of the cotton grower, that of being able to harvest all the cotton he plants and to do so before the rains and frosts damage the plants and greatly lessen the value of the lint and seed.

It now takes 1,600 pounds of hand picked seed cotton to make a 500-pound bale of cotton lint—that is, cotton after the seeds and dirt are removed at the gin. With the electric picker, results have shown that 1,450 pounds of seed cotton will make the same 500-pound bale of lint. This is possible because the electric picker picks up little dirt and other trash and because the electric picker makes the balls fluffier and the gin secures more lint. Statistics show that in one year 24,000 carloads of dirt were brought to the cotton gins of the South with the seed cotton.

The latest attempt to replace hand picking may be called the life work of L. C. Stuckenberg of Memphis, Tenn. He received his inspiration when watching a cow which had broken down the gates and wandered into the cotton field. Cows will eat cotton for the seeds imbedded in the fibre, and as this cow went from plant to plant he noticed the ease with which the cotton was removed from the bolls by the animal's rough tongue.

After experiments extending over fourteen years he perfected two revolving brushes incased in a small metal frame about the size of a man's double fists. The brushes were made to revolve inwardly, or toward one another, thus creating a power which drew the cotton from the boll.

FACTS ABOUT NEW YORK

Greater New York is lighted by 78,300 street lights. Of these 67,803 are electric and 10,575 gas lamps. Naphtha lamps make up the total. The cost of these street lights to the city annually is \$2,948,051. The electric lights for the chief streets are of 300 watts and the lights for the residence districts range from 100 to 200 candle-power each.

The water front of the city, measuring around the docks and into the islets, is 748 miles in length.

The greatest snowfall in the city's history for twenty-four hours fell from February 17 to 18, 1893. It was seventeen and eight-tenths inches.

December 30, 1917, was the coldest day in the city's history, 13 degrees below zero. The warmest day was August 7, 1918, 102 degrees above.

The greatest rainfall, October 8 to 9, 1903, was nine and forty-one hundredths inches. The wettest year was 1889 and the driest 1916. In the former year over fifty-eight inches fell and in the latter thirty-five inches.

New York city has over 900,000 telephone stations.

The power and light wires used by one electrical company in Manhattan and The Bronx are long enough to encircle the globe sixteen times. The cables contain 31,000,000 pounds of copper.

If the sewers of Greater New York were placed end to end it would mean a tunnel just about long enough to reach San Francisco. If it did not quite reach that city it would be close enough to alarm the good people of the Golden Gate. Manhattan alone has 536 miles of sewers.

One sewer running down Canal street, draining only 242 acres, is 16 feet wide and 8 feet high. Another sewer on East Forty-ninth street drains 616 acres and is 9 by 8 feet in dimensions. There are others also through which motor cars might easily travel.

Manhattan has 826 churches, of which 76 are Jewish and 158 Roman Catholic. Brooklyn has a total of 579, of which 34 are Jewish and 125 Catholic. The others are almost entirely Christian places of worship, although a few are devoted to faiths seldom heard of in a country like this.

BASEBALL PLAYED FORTY CENTURIES AGO

Although it is a proven fact that the game now designated baseball is of modern and purely American origin, the use of a ball in ceremonies and games goes back many centuries.

Four thousand years ago, in the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty, a Coptic artist sculptured on the Temple Beni Hassan human figures throwing and catching balls.

A leather-covered ball used in games played on the Nile over forty centuries ago has a place among the many archaeological specimens in the British museum.

The game of ball was prized by the Greeks as giving grace and elasticity to the human figure, and they erected a statue to one Aristicus for his proficiency in it. Ancient medical practitioners were wont to prescribe a course of ball playing, where the modern doctor would order a diet of pills.

The Chinese have played ball in various ways from times of remote antiquity. For centuries games of ball have been known and played in Japan. Ethiopian and East Indian traditions refer to games with balls played many centuries ago.

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How I increased my salary more than 300%

by
Joseph Anderson

I AM just the average man—twenty-eight years old, with a wife and a three-year-old youngster. I left school when I was fourteen. My parents didn't want me to do it, but I thought I knew more than they did.

I can see my father now, standing before me, pleading, threatening, coaxing me to keep on with my schooling. With tears in his eyes he told me how he had been a failure all his life because of lack of education—that the untrained man is always forced to work for a small salary—that he had hoped, yes, and prayed, that I would be a more successful man than he was.

But no! My mind was made up. I had been offered a job at nine dollars a week and I was going to take it.

That nine dollars looked awfully big to me. I didn't realize then, nor for years afterward, that I was being paid only for the work of my hands. My brain didn't count.

THEN one day, glancing through a magazine, I came across the story of a man just like myself. He, too, had left school when he was fourteen years of age, and had worked for years at a small salary. But he was ambitious. He decided that he would get out of the rut by training himself to become expert in some line of work.

So he got in touch with the International Correspondence Schools at Scranton and started to study in his spare time at home. It was the turn in the road for him—the beginning of his success.

Most stories like that tell of the presidents of great institutions who are earning \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year. Those stories frighten me. I don't think I could ever earn that much. But this story told of a man who, through spare time study, lifted himself from \$25 to \$75 a week. It made an impression on me because it talked in terms I could understand. It seemed reasonable to suppose that I could do as well.

I tell you it didn't take me long that time to mark and send in that familiar coupon. Information regarding the Course I had marked came back by return mail. I found it wasn't too late to make up the education I had denied myself as a boy.

I was surprised to find out how fascinating a home-study course could be. The I. C. S. worked with me every hour I had to spare. I felt myself growing. I knew there was a bigger job waiting for me somewhere.

Four months after I enrolled my employer came to me and told me that he always gave preference to men who studied their jobs—and that my next



salary envelope would show how much he thought of the improvement in my work.

Today, my salary is more than 300% greater than it was when I began my studies. That increase has meant a better home and all the luxuries that make life worth while.

What I have done, you can do. For I am just an average man. I had no more education to begin with than you have—perhaps not as much. The only difference is a matter of training.

TO every man who is earning less than \$75 a week, I say simply this:—*Find out what the I. C. S. can do for you!*

It will take only a minute of your time to mark and mail the coupon. But that one simple act may change your whole life.

If I hadn't taken that first step four years ago I wouldn't be writing this message to you today! No, and I wouldn't be earning anywhere near \$75 a week, either!

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